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THE LETTERS OF HANNAH MORE

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

THE LETTERS OF
MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

THE LETTERS OF JANE AUSTEN

BLUE-STOCKING LETTERS

Each volume edited, with an Introduction, by
R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

THE BODLEY HEAD

THE
LETTERS OF HANNAH MORE

SELECTED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

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PREFACE

HANNAH MORE'S *Letters* can be found in (1) *Memoirs and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More.* Edited by Wm. Roberts, 4 vols., 1834 : (2) *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Hannah More.* By Wm. Roberts, 2 vols., 1836 ; being a third edition of (1), with a large number of letters *to* Hannah More omitted, " to produce a work more strictly biographical." (3) *Letters of Hannah More to Zachary Macaulay* ; containing notices of Lord Macaulay's youth. Edited by Arthur Roberts, 1860 ; son of William.

Hannah More's life was so sharply divided into two parts [(i) the early years of visiting, chiefly in London, among the Blue Stockings, the Garricks, Horace Walpole, Dr. Johnson, and Sir Joshua Reynolds ; followed, in her 43rd year, by (ii) a life entirely devoted to the starting and organizing of schools for the poor in almost barbarous English villages], that I have not quite strictly adhered to chronological order throughout. The few letters written after her school work began, which refer to the friends and interests of her social life, are printed with the lighter descriptive correspondence.

These are immediately followed by the small group of anecdotes from Lord Macaulay's boyhood : two original humorous sketches, sent to friends in letters : and, finally, the correspondence upon her educational, religious work. Some account of the violent attacks made on the schools is included in these selections ; because her defence contains the only detailed and comprehensive statement of her aims and methods. But, in these selections, all personal references to her critics are omitted, as being of no interest to-day.

The Introduction, as in my *Letters of Mary Russell Mitford*, aims more at characterization than detailed biography or criticism ; the intention of these volumes from the correspondence of great women, being to reflect or present the complete personalities of writers who are, in many cases, chiefly known by one book or in relation to one class of literary work.

The few slight antiquities in spelling are here retained ; and the supreme indifference to consistency, in the use of italics, quotation marks, etc. Obvious misprints are corrected.

R. B. J.

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THE LETTERS OF HANNAH MORE

INTRODUCTION

It would be hard to say how many of us are still familiar with the name of Hannah More, or what associations the name may suggest to the present generation; and yet more difficult to determine by what right she survives among women of letters. She was certainly a "best-seller," but that is not an achievement which in itself confers immortality. She was not an artist in style, or even a sound critic; her one novel is deservedly unread; and we cannot even say that all she did was well done, since her "blue-stocking" rhymes and *jeux d'esprit*, though respectable, are not distinguished.

To be among the earliest of those who denounced slavery and strove to educate the poor; to have been intimate with Garrick and Dr. Johnson, or even to have cheered and guided the youth of Macaulay, is not enough to obtain a passport to fame.

It is the personality of Hannah More that lives; and that without any *one* obvious or outstanding

characteristic. Her strength, I believe, was mainly derived from efficiency, as it was certainly directed by strong common sense. She had, in her day and generation, a remarkable instinct for journalism; she knew a great deal about what publicity-men to-day call the psychology of the multitude; and, despite the sentiment of her literary tastes and religious emotions, despite the vehement narrowness of her creed, despite her avowed determination to keep the poor in their place, and fit them for that place, she never gave up her sense of humour or the power to enjoy life—she was always practical in doing good, and far more sincere, of finer spiritual charity, than those professing wider and more advanced views.

Born in 1745 at Bristol, from a fine old East Anglian Puritan stock, of a younger branch turned staunch upholders of Church and State, she inherited unquestioning respect for the Powers that Be from a schoolmaster father and his intellectual, though farm-bred, wife. There were five daughters in that cheerful and serious household, all exceptionally vigorous and strong-minded, almost brilliant, who remained unmarried and close friends through life. No one has heard of Mary and Patty More; but the former established a successful girls' school at the age of

twenty-one, which supported four sisters for many years ; the latter had a full half-share in Hannah's famous free-education campaign, revealing a unique power of command over powerful enemies and difficult situations. In the correspondence of earlier, worldly, days her sisters' letters are as witty and sparkling as her own ; while in the home circle Sally was " considered the wag."

I suspect that Hannah, the youngest but one of the loving sisterhood, achieved what they missed, by virtue of one further talent : the instinct for always clothing her frivolous, or serious, ideas in words ; the fluent pen which is the medium of transport from a family, to the world's recognition of a big brain. A certain respect for those who write is practically universal ; and it is the obvious way to become known.

Hannah, at any rate, was petted and admired by her family because she was always scribbling ; and though—with uncanny prevision of the future —her precocity scared Jacob More from teaching her Latin or mathematics lest he be rearing a female pedant, his wife—" a young woman of plain education "—prevailed upon him to let the child continue her studies. In those days, moreover, the city of Bristol proved stimulating to culture and learning : with Joseph Cottle eager to

print for young poets, Chatterton laboriously creating literary "antiques," and the dressmaker sisters waiting for Southey and Coleridge. There was congenial society for the Misses More.

It was, however, a somewhat unromantic romance which actually procured Hannah's liberty from "governessing," to gratify the ambition of her childhood—"to go to London and see the booksellers and the bishops." Partly, no doubt, because they were young themselves, but also because their educational theories were somewhat in advance of the times, the teachers and girls in the boarding-school were also friends. When, therefore, Squire Turner of the Belmont, wealthy guardian to two of the pupils, encouraged his wards "to ask any young persons at the school" to spend the holidays with them in his "agreeable residence, their choice fell on Hannah and Patty More. The consequence was natural."

Scribbling Hannah wrote "inscriptions" for various "beauty spots" on the estate, which this elderly Orlando "had painted on signboards" and nailed on to the barks of trees! She gave up her profession, and spent her savings upon the *trousseaux*. But the gentleman would not "name the day." He admired the lady; but one conjectures that intimacy had made him perhaps even pain-

fully aware of being her senior by twenty years; and, whether chiefly doubting for her happiness or his own, he plainly dreaded the risk. The Mores, naturally, could not accept his attitude; and "in the counsel of a good friend Hannah found resolution to terminate this anxious and painful treaty."

Though her biographer writes at some length of the effects of "these embarrassments upon her correct and tender mind, only relieved by the resolution to avoid a similar entanglement," which soon actually materialized, there is no real evidence in her letters or diaries of any permanent change of attitude towards men and life. On the other hand, the "compensation for breach" of a moderate annuity, and the legacy of a thousand pounds, which the halting lover prevailed upon her to accept, did, in fact, determine her whole future.

Frequent and long visits to town were now easy to arrange. She had the *entrée* to the best (intellectual) set; with a quite comfortable, if modest, assurance of her own power to shine, and the natural ambitions of a youth that had learned something of its own attractiveness.

Eighteenth-century London offered a fair field for conquest. An introduction to the Lion of Grub Street, to Drury Lane or the Reynolds'

salon, to Montagu House or the Sylph's " every other Tuesdays," even to " the little Burney," would quickly open the doors of every one worth knowing.

Dr. Johnson, innocently, loved the ladies, particularly young ladies, and we soon find Hannah writing of a morning headache as the consequence of " raking out so late with that gay libertine." She is admitted at once to the select assemblies of that perfect hostess, Sir Joshua's sister; and becomes " dear Nine," or all the Muses, to the adored David Garrick, " Saint Hannah " to Horace Walpole. The " Great " Mrs. Delany, " a living library of knowledge," actually asks her to call.

Being, moreover, an accomplished and well-read young woman, she was naturally welcomed by the inner circle of those remarkable pioneer feminists who conducted " conversaziones " to " free society from the tyranny of whist and quadrilles " : talking " lively nonsense " for eight or nine hours at a stretch, or laughing at " old stories " from Johnson and Garrick " in defiance of every rule of decorum and Chesterfield, until an impertinent watchman became saucily vociferous." In such society, she *says* that she " felt herself a worm "; but their " encouraging kindness " quickly banished any such embarrassment; until she could cheer-

fully tell of "their laudable custom of getting tipsy twice a day upon Hereford cider."

We associate Hannah More with the strictest and dullest forms of piety, and we admire, or scoff at, her rebuking the sins of the great; but she entered life with a fine store of warm-hearted, fresh, girlish enthusiasm—as a cultivated country-cousin, whose simple, but clever and merry, flatteries were an unceasing delight to the now somewhat mature *Bas Bleu*.

She notes, indeed, that while Mrs. Montagu combines "the sprightly vivacity of fifteen with the judgment and experience of a Nestor; her form (for she has no body) is delicate even to fragility. She is hastening to decay very fast; her spirits are so active, they must soon wear out the little frail receptacle that holds them." Similar grief for the troubles of Mrs. Vesey and Mrs. Boscawen is elsewhere recorded. It was her part to cheer them by her unclouded youth.

For us, again, her gay verses on the *Bas Bleu* may be almost regarded as the official contemporary record of the group; a memorial of their ways and thought by "one who knew," not elsewhere attempted. She is not, naturally, quite just to the original French salon: "the intolerably bright point and equivoque at the quaint Hotel Rambouillet"; altogether eclipsed, in her

view, by the "sprightly but serious" conversation-parties of "sober duchesses"—

> Chaste wits, and critics void of spleen—
> Poets, fulfilling Christian duties,
> Just lawyers, reasonable beauties,
> Bishops who preach, or peers who pay,
> And Countesses who seldom play,
> Learned antiquaries who, from college,
> Reject the rust and bring the knowledge,
> And travellers of that rare tribe
> Who 've seen the countries they describe.

The more serious side of Hannah More's nature, already awake, was pleased by "so much wit under the banner of so much decorum; an innocent kind of wit, in Addison's manner"; by talk maintained "on the strength of a little lemonade, without cards, scandal, or politics"; and by the simple device of setting a few card-tables, to occupy stupid people, otherwise liable to spoil the feast. She comments, again, upon the brilliance of a certain evening when there were no *men* present; and refers with enthusiasm to the "little literary societies" held at breakfast—"There is generally company at meals, *as they think it saves time!*" There was, indeed, a moral side to the ladies' assumption of superiority to the frivolous fashions of the day; and a mental activity that appealed to her more strenuous outlook on life. They

scorned "sensibility"; and worshipped Sir Charles Grandison.

She comments severely upon "the foolish absurdity of the present mode of dress," declaring that eleven damsels, at one evening party, "had, amongst them, on their heads, an acre and a half of shrubbery, besides slopes, grass-plots, tulip-beds, clumps of peonies, kitchen-gardens, and green-houses." It has been conjectured that she assisted Garrick in his "make up" for laughing these enormities out of fashion, by appearing on the stage with a complete vegetable crop on his head, "including glass cucumber frames, and a pendent carrot at each ear."

Hannah More, meanwhile, was becoming a "personage" on her own account. Garrick encouraged her to write plays, at which even "respectable people" shed tears; whether she issued gay verses or solemn tirades against vice, the world was eager to read and applaud; and few authors have secured upon a varied output such rapid success from almost every section of the public. Flattery was then the habit; and we can hardly feel certain that either the *Bas Bleu*, Dr. Johnson, or Garrick found any real merit in the work. But she expressed, with direct and vigorous simplicity, a number of feelings and thoughts that were in the air. She had the courage to be at once humorous

and straightforward, when her purpose was high morality and faith. She made clear statements in favour of Tory dogmas ; while scoffing at Tory squires :

> He dreaded nought like alteration
> Improvement still was innovation ;
> He said when any change was brewing
> Reform was a fine name for ruin.
> This maxim firmly he would hold,
> That must be always good that 's old.

It was Garrick's death, and her subsequent devotion to his heart-broken widow, that detached her from the happy preoccupations of the wits ; gradually evolving those resolute home-missionary activities, which were to absorb her entire existence and make her name a household word.

Though her religious opinions, which actually inspired the work, have long been vetoed by the most orthodox believers, though her political creed would not secure one vote to-day, though she accepted almost everything that we now see to have been fatal to real progress, there are many sides to her actually great achievements which deserve " honourable mention " and very profound respect.

If we remember the falling away of Southey and Wordsworth from their visions of youth to the up-

holding of established convention, we may approach realization of the scare born in Respectability by Monsieur Guillotine. When Hannah More called the new idea of teaching science and literature to poor children, " revolutionary as well as irreligious," she was only expressing the general attitude of her contemporaries. She had been attacked herself for teaching them to read ! and for associating with abolitionists. All reformers were suspect. The poor who could read would obey neither God nor man.

At the same time the morality of French aristocrats and the writings of French philosophers were attributed to the Devil ; and the approved " sober measure of Christian instruction which lay between the two extremes " was narrow indeed.

Morality was based almost exclusively upon keeping the Sabbath holy : " He who is taught arithmetic on a Sunday when a boy," in Miss More's judgment, " will, when a man, open his shop on a Sunday " ; than which could be no greater sin.

There was danger even in too much religion for the poor. In her defence to the Bishop of Bath and Wells, Hannah ventured to remind him that " the illiterate, when they become religious, are more liable to enthusiasm than the better informed. They have also a coarse way of ex-

pressing their religious sentiments, which often appears to be enthusiasm, when it is only vulgarity or quaintness. But this does not furnish a reason why the poor should be left destitute of religious instruction. . . . *I do not vindicate enthusiasm, I dread it.* But can the possibility that a few should become enthusiastic be justly pleaded as an excuse for giving them *all* up to actual vice and barbarism ? "

Hannah must risk " enthusiasm," we note, and carry on " doing good." She must help the poor, if she cannot keep them where they belong. Labourers' children should be taught only " such coarse works as may fit them for servants. I allow of no writing for the poor." " For young farmers," she added " writing and arithmetic, to qualify them for constables, overseers, churchwardens and jurors ; above all that they might understand the nature of an oath."

To us it may seem a ridiculously poor effort ; poisoned, moreover, by the obstinate stupidity of a snob ; but, in the first place, she and her sister actually wore themselves out for years, against malicious opposition, to accomplish this first small step in a few utterly barbarous and depraved districts ; reforming the whole village life—welcoming help from a rich " woman of loose morals, but good natural sense, who became their friend

sooner than some of the decent and the formal"; and, in the second place, the work combined the giving of happiness, health, and some conception of neighbourliness and citizen responsibility, with a good deal of salvation and a little learning. It was practical, sensible, and thoroughly efficient up to standard; though incredibly hard to achieve.

In the public eye, Hannah More triumphed over all opposition and won universal applause; because her aim was clear and her courage undaunted. Seeing a way to do good, no risk of misrepresentation, no fear, even, that her pupils or more reckless reformers might turn her methods to dangerous extremes, had any power to hold her back. She produced for use in the schools, and to extend her propaganda, innumerable cheap tracts and tales for the people that sold in millions. She calls them "as vulgar as heart can wish, but designed for the most vulgar class of readers." They had, nevertheless, a considerable influence upon politics, educational movements through the country, and public morality—by teaching the young to associate innocent *pleasures* with a pious mind.

Nevertheless I believe that the ultimate cause of her success, the secret of love won and hearts conquered, may be found in her personal emotion towards all in trouble, as individual human beings;

never regarded as types or cases, never less eagerly loved for backsliding or ingratitude; if once, then always her friends. Theologically expressed, she followed the Christ-law of never confounding the sinner with his sin. There is no instance, in all the correspondence or journals about her work, of any reproach, or even impatience, towards those to whom her life was given.

Outside the schools, moreover, there is a tale told which reveals much. Hearing that a young girl, named Harriet Lester, had attempted to commit suicide by throwing herself into the canal in masquerade dress, Hannah set out immediately to "see what could be done"; traced her—through inquiries at the Hospital—to her lodgings "in a street of very bad fame"; learned how her father had "sold her at sixteen in the King's Bench to a fellow-prisoner"; and persuaded her to leave the unfaithful "protector," whose neglect had driven her to the attempt on her own life.

But Miss More adds: "We are by no means sure of Harriet going on well and shall not be surprised if she leaves us in a moment." When this happened, she only wrote to the girl, "who was but eighteen," if ever it should please God to touch her heart with true repentance, "to write to me, and I would still receive her." Five years

later, Harriet Lester is not lost sight of, and her friend " still hopes."

Hannah tells us a little of Harriet's prettiness, good manners, and sad face ; but does not waste one word upon any expression of horror at the facts, or even to abuse her betrayer. Her whole tone is pity, not blame. She simply *does* as much as she can to help ; faces the probability of all her care and trouble being in vain ; and accepts failure without a word of reproach, only anxious that Harriet should still look upon her as a friend.

We may ask whether the most advanced modern social-worker could show a more broad-minded understanding.

There was, finally, no call for sympathy to which she ever failed to respond. When seriously ill, at the age of seventy-six, her publisher wrote to beg for " a short tribute to our late lamented King," as a Preface to a new edition of her *Moral Sketches*.

" Having got everybody out of the way, I furnished myself with pen, ink, and paper, which I concealed in my bed, and next morning, in a high fever, with my pulse above a hundred, without having formed one idea, bolstered up, I began to write. I got on for about seven pages, my hand being almost as incompetent as my head. I hid my scrawl, and said not a word, while my doctor and my friends wondered at my increased debility. After a strong opiate, I next morning returned to

my task, and finished seven pages more, and delivered my almost illegible papers to my friend to transcribe and send away. I got well scolded, but I loved the King, and was carried through by a sort of affectionate impulse."

For a Harriet Lester, for the King! the same untiring energy and self-sacrifice. Small wonder she achieved great work.

R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON.

LIFE, LEARNING, AND THE ARTS

LETTERS

H. More to Mrs. Gwatkin

HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN,
LONDON [1773].

MY DEAR MADAM,

Here have I been a whole week, to my shame be it spoken, without ever having given you the least intimation of my existence, or change of situation; but I doubt not of your having been informed of it by my friend Charlotte. You, who know the hurry, bustle, dissipation, and nonsensical flutter of a town life, will, I am sure, excuse me if I have not devoted a few minutes to you before, when I assure you it has not been in my power. Martha and the fair Clarissa are of the party, and we are comfortably situated in Henrietta Street.

Monday we dined, drank tea, and supped, at the amiable Sir Joshua Reynolds'; there was a brilliant circle of both sexes; not, in general, literary, though partly so. We were not suffered to come away till one.

I have not been able to pay my devoirs to my dear Dr. Johnson yet, though Miss Reynolds has offered to accompany me whenever I am at leisure. I wish I could convey his "Journey to the Hebrides"

to you; Cadell tells me he sold 4000 of them the first week. It is an agreeable work, though the subject is sterility itself. He knows how to avail himself of the commonest circumstances, and trifles are no longer trifles when they have passed through his hands. He makes the most entertaining and useful reflections on every occurrence, and when occurrences fail, he has a never-failing fund in his own accomplished and prolific mind. Pray let me hear from you soon. I wish you were with us.

I am so hurried, that I do not know what I write. Adieu, my dear friend,

Yours at all times,

HANNAH MORE.

H. More to her Sister

LONDON, 1775.

Our first visit was to Sir Joshua's, where we were received with all the friendship imaginable. I am going, to-day, to a great dinner. Nothing can be conceived so absurd, extravagant, and fantastical, as the present mode of dressing the head. Simplicity and modesty are things so much exploded, that the very names are no longer remembered. I have just escaped from one of the most fashionable disfigurers; and though I charged him to dress me with the greatest simplicity, and to have only a very distant eye upon the fashion, just enough to avoid the pride of singularity, without running into ridiculous excess; yet in spite of all these sage

didactics, I absolutely blush at myself, and turn to the glass with as much caution as a vain beauty, just risen from the smallpox; which cannot be a more disfiguring disease than the present mode of dressing. Of the one, the calamity may be greater in its consequences, but of the other it is more corrupt in its cause. We have been reading a treatise on the morality of Shakspeare; it is a happy and easy way of filling a book that the present race of authors have arrived at—that of criticizing the works of some eminent poet; with monstrous extracts and short remarks. It is a species of cookery I begin to grow tired of; they cut up their authors into chops, and by adding a little crumbled bread of their own, and tossing it up a little, they present it as a fresh dish: you are to dine upon the poet—the critic supplies the garnish; yet has the credit, as well as profit, of the whole entertainment.

From the same to the same

LONDON, 1775.

I had yesterday the pleasure of dining in Hill Street, Berkeley Square, *at a certain Mrs. Montagu's, a name not totally obscure*. The party consisted of herself, Mrs. Carter, Dr. Johnson, Solander, and Matty, Mrs. Boscawen, Miss Reynolds, and Sir Joshua (the idol of every company); some other persons of high rank and less wit, and your humble servant—a party that would not have disgraced

the table of Lælius, or of Atticus. I felt myself a worm, the more a worm for the consequence which was given me, by mixing me with such a society; but, as I told Mrs. Boscawen, and with great truth, I had an opportunity of making an experiment of my heart, by which I learnt that I was not envious, for I certainly did not repine at being the meanest person in company.

Mrs. Montagu received me with the most encouraging kindness; she is not only the finest genius, but the finest lady I ever saw: she lives in the highest style of magnificence; her apartments and table are in the most splendid taste: but what baubles are these when speaking of a Montagu! her form (for she has no *body*) is delicate even to fragility; her countenance the most animated in the world; the sprightly vivacity of fifteen, with the judgment and experience of a Nestor. But I fear she is hastening to decay very fast; her spirits are so active, that they must soon wear out the little frail receptacle that holds them. Mrs. Carter has in her person a great deal of what the gentlemen mean when they say such a one is a "poetical lady"; however, independently of her great talents and learning, I like her much; she has affability, kindness, and goodness; and I honour her heart even more than her talents: but I do not like one of them better than Mrs. Boscawen; she is at once polite, learned, judicious, and humble; and Mrs. Palk tells me, her letters are thought not inferior to Mrs. Montagu's. She regretted (so did I), that so

many suns could not possibly shine at one time; but we are to have a smaller party, where, from fewer luminaries, there may emanate a clearer, steadier, and more beneficial light. Dr. Johnson asked me how I liked the new tragedy of Braganza. I was afraid to speak before them all, as I knew a diversity of opinion prevailed among the company: however, as I thought it a less evil to dissent from the opinion of a fellow-creature, than to tell a falsity, I ventured to give my sentiments; and was satisfied with Johnson's answering, "You are right, madam."

From the same to the same

LONDON, 1775.

"Bear me, some God, O quickly bear me hence,
To wholesome solitude, the nurse of ——"

"Sense," I was going to add in the words of Pope, till I recollected that *pence* had a more appropriate meaning, and was as good a rhyme. This apostrophe broke from me on coming from the opera, the first I ever *did*, the last I trust I ever *shall* go to. For what purpose has the Lord of the universe made His creature man with a comprehensive mind? Why make him a little lower than the angels? Why give him the faculty of thinking, the powers of wit and memory; and to crown all, an immortal and never-dying spirit? Why all this wondrous waste, this prodigality of bounty, if the mere animal senses of sight and hearing (by which

he is not distinguished from the brutes that perish) would have answered the end as well; and yet I find the same people are seen at the opera every night—an amusement written in a language the greater part of them do not understand, and performed by such a set of beings!

But the man

> "Who bade the reign commence
> Of rescued nature and reviving sense"

sat at my elbow, and reconciled me to my situation, not by his approbation, but his presence. Going to the opera, like getting drunk, is a sin that carries its own punishment with it, and that a very severe one. Thank my dear Dr. S—— for his kind and seasonable admonitions on my last Sunday's engagement at Mrs. Montagu's. Conscience had done its office before; nay, was busy at the time: and if it did not dash the cup of pleasure to the ground, infused at least a tincture of wormwood into it. I *did* think of the alarming call, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" and I thought of it to-night at the opera.

From the same to the same

Sunday night, 9 o'clock.

Perhaps you will say I ought to have thought of it again to-day, when I tell you I have dined abroad; but it is a day I reflect on without those uneasy sensations one has when one is conscious it

has been spent in trifling company. I have been at Mrs. Boscawen's. Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Chapone, and myself only were admitted. We spent the time, not as wits, but as reasonable creatures; better characters, I trow. The conversation was sprightly but serious. I have not enjoyed an afternoon so much since I have been in town. There was much sterling sense, and they are all ladies of high character for piety; of which, however, I do not think their visiting on Sundays any proof: for though their conversation is edifying, the example is bad. You do not, I presume, expect I should send you a transcript of the conversation: I have told you the interlocutors, but you are not to expect the dialogue. Patty says if she had such rich subjects, she could make a better hand of them: I believe her: my outlines are perhaps more just, but she beats me all to nothing in the colouring. She is but a young painter, and is fond of drapery and ornament: for my own part the more I see of the "honoured, famed and great," the more I see of the littleness, the unsatisfactoriness of all created good; and that no earthly pleasure can fill up the wants of the immortal principle within. One need go no farther than the company I have just left, to be convinced that "pain is for man," and that fortune, talents, and science are no exemption from the universal lot. Mrs. Montagu, eminently distinguished for wit and virtue, "the wisest where all are wise," is hastening to insensible decay by a slow, but sure hectic. Mrs. Chapone

has experienced the severest reverses of fortune; and Mrs. Boscawen's life has been a continued series of afflictions, which may almost bear a parallel with those of the righteous man of Uz. Tell me, then, what is it to be wise? This you will say is exhibiting the unfavourable side of the picture of humanity, but it is the right side, the side that shows the likeness.

LONDON, 1775.

I have read Sir Joshua's last discourse at the academy: in my poor judgment it is a masterpiece for matter as well as style, and that we have scarcely a finer writer. I have told the Reynoldses how angry I am with Burke for an unhandsome paragraph on the Dean of Gloucester (Dr. Tucker). They are warm friends, but I would not give up my point. They seem to think that the man and the politician are different things: but I do not see why a person should not be bound to speak truth in the House of Commons as much as in his own house.[1]

Miss H. More to her Sister

LONDON, 1776.

Just returned from spending one of the most agreeable days of my life, with the female Mæcenas of Hill Street: she engaged me five or six days ago

[1] Mrs. H. More has frequently mentioned, as a curious coincidence, that Edmund Burke, Dean Tucker, and Mrs. Macauley called upon her in Park Street, Bristol, on the same morning, fortunately in succession, as they were all at that time writing against each other.

to dine with her, and had assembled half the wits of the age. The only fault that charming woman has, is, that she is fond of collecting too many of them together at one time. There were nineteen persons assembled at dinner, but after the repast, she has a method of dividing her guests, or rather letting them assort themselves into little groups of five or six each. I spent my time in going from one to the other of these little societies, as I happened more or less to like the subjects they were discussing. Mrs. Scott, Mrs. Montagu's sister, a very good writer, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Barbauld, and a man of letters, whose name I have forgotten, made up one of these little parties. When we had canvassed two or three subjects, I stole off and joined in with the next group, which was composed of Mrs. Montagu, Dr. Johnson, the Provost of Dublin, and two other ingenious men. In this party there was a diversity of opinions, which produced a great deal of good argument and reasoning. There were several other groups less interesting to me, as they were composed more of rank than talent, and it was amusing to see how the people of sentiment singled out each other, and how the fine ladies and pretty gentlemen naturally slid into each other's society.

I had the happiness to carry Dr. Johnson home from Hill Street, though Mrs. Montagu publicly declared she did not think it prudent to trust us together, with such a declared affection on both sides. She said she was afraid of a Scotch elope-

ment. He has invited himself to drink tea with us to-morrow, that we may read Sir Eldred together. I shall not tell you what he said of it, but to me the best part of his flattery was, that he repeats all the best stanzas by heart, with the energy, though not with the grace of a Garrick.

LONDON, 1776.

Let the Muses shed tears, for Garrick has this day sold the patent of Drury Lane Theatre, and will act no more after this winter. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* He retires with all his blushing honours thick about him; his laurels as green as in their early spring. Who shall supply his loss to the stage? Who shall now hold the master-key of the human heart? Who direct the passions with more than magic power? Who purify the stage; and who, in short, shall direct and nurse my dramatic muse?

Yesterday was another of the few sunshiny days with which human life is so scantily furnished. We spent it at Garrick's: he was in high good humour, and inexpressibly agreeable. Here was likely to have been another jostling and intersecting of our pleasures; but as they knew Johnson would be with us at seven, Mrs. Garrick was so good as to dine a little after three, and all things fell out in comfortable succession. We were at the reading of a new tragedy, and insolently and unfeelingly pronounced against it. We got home in time: I hardly ever spent an evening more pleasantly or

profitably. Johnson, full of wisdom and piety, was very communicative. To enjoy Dr. Johnson perfectly, one must have him to oneself, as he seldom cares to speak in mixed parties. Our tea was not over till nine; we then fell upon Sir Eldred: he read both poems through; suggested some little alterations in the first, and did me the honour to write one whole stanza; but in the Rock he has not altered a word. Though only a tea visit, he staid with us till twelve. I was quite at my ease, and never once asked him to eat (drink he never does anything but tea); while you, I dare say, would have been fidgetted to death, and would have sent half over the town for chickens, and oysters, and asparagus, and Madeira. You see how frugal it is to be well-bred, and not to think of such a vulgar renovation as eating and drinking.

LONDON, 1776.

Again I am annoyed by the foolish absurdity of the present mode of dress. Some ladies carry on their heads a large quantity of fruit, and yet they would despise a poor useful member of society, who carried it there for the purpose of selling it for bread. Some, at the back of their perpendicular caps, hang four or five ostrich feathers, of different colours, etc. Spirit of Addison! thou pure and gentle shade, arise! thou, who with such fine humour, and such polished sarcasm, didst lash the cherry-coloured hood, and the party patches; and cut down, with a trenchant sickle, a whole harvest

of follies and absurdities! awake! for the follies thou didst lash were but the beginning of follies; and the absurdities thou didst censure, were but the seeds of absurdities! Oh, that thy master-spirit, speaking and chiding in thy graceful page, could recall the blushes, and collect the scattered and mutilated remnants of female modesty!

H. More to one of her Family

LONDON, 1776.

I dined in the Adelphi yesterday. It was a particular occasion—an annual meeting, where none but men are usually asked. I was however of the party, and an agreeable day it was to me. I have seldom heard so much wit, under the banner of so much decorum. I mention this, because I was told it was a day of licence, and that every body was to say what they pleased. Colman and Dr. Schomberg were of the party; the rest were chiefly old doctors of divinity. I had a private whisper that I must dine there again to-day, to assist at the celebration of the birth-day. We had a little snug dinner in the library. At six, I begged leave to come home, as I expected my *petite assemblée* a little after seven. Mrs. Garrick offered me all her fine things, but, as I hate admixtures of finery and meanness, I refused every thing except a little cream, and a few sorts of cakes. They came at seven. The *dramatis personæ* were, Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Garrick, and Miss Reynolds; my beaux were Dr. Johnson, Dean

Tucker, and last, but not least in our love, David Garrick. You know that wherever Johnson is, the confinement to the tea-table is rather a durable situation ; and it was an hour and a half before I got my enlargement. However, my ears were opened, though my tongue was locked, and they all stayed till near eleven.

Garrick was the very soul of the company, and I never saw Johnson in such perfect good humour. Sally knows we have often heard that one can never properly enjoy the company of these two unless they are together. There is great truth in this remark ; for after the Dean and Mrs. Boscawen were withdrawn, and the rest stood up to go, Johnson and Garrick began a close encounter, telling old stories, " e'en from their boyish days," at Lichfield. We all stood round them above an hour, laughing in defiance of every rule of decorum and Chesterfield. I believe we should not have thought of sitting down or of parting, had not an impertinent watchman been saucily vociferous. Johnson outstaid them all, and sat with me half an hour.

I 'll tell you the most ridiculous circumstance in the world. After dinner Garrick took up the Monthly Review (civil gentlemen, by the bye, these Monthly Reviewers), and read " Sir Eldred " with all his pathos and all his graces. I think I never was so ashamed in my life ; but he read it so superlatively, that I cried like a child. Only think what a scandalous thing, to cry at the reading of one's

own poetry! I could have beaten myself; for it looked as if I thought it very moving, which, I can truly say, was far from being the case. But the beauty of the jest lies in this: Mrs. Garrick twinkled as well as I, and made as many apologies for crying at her husband's reading, as I did for crying at my own verses. *She* got out of the scrape by pretending she was touched at the story, and *I*, by saying the same thing of the reading. It furnished us with a great laugh at the catastrophe, when it would really have been decent to have been a little sorrowful.

LONDON, 1776.

Did I ever tell you what Dr. Johnson said to me of my friend the Dean of Gloucester? I asked him what he thought of him. His answer was *verbatim* as follows: "I look upon the Dean of Gloucester to be one of the few excellent writers of this period. I differ from him in opinion, and have expressed that difference in my writings; but I hope what I wrote did not indicate what I did not feel, for I felt no acrimony. No person, however learned, can read his writings without improvement. He is sure to find something he did not know before." I told him the Dean did not value himself on elegance of style. He said he knew nobody whose style was more perspicuous, manly, and vigorous, or better suited to his subject. I was not a little pleased with this tribute to the worthy Dean's merit, from such a judge of merit; that man, too, professedly differing from him in opinion.

Would you believe it? In the midst of all the pomps and vanities of this wicked town, I have taken it into my head to study like a dragon; I read four or five hours every day, and wrote ten hours yesterday. How long this will last I do not know—but I fear no longer than the bad weather. I wish you could see a picture Sir Joshua has just finished, of the prophet Samuel, on his being called. "The gaze of young astonishment" was never so beautifully expressed. Sir Joshua tells me that he is exceedingly mortified when he shows this picture to some of the great—they ask him who Samuel was? I told him he must get somebody to make an Oratorio of Samuel, and then it would not be vulgar to confess they knew something of him. He said he was glad to find that I was intimately acquainted with that devoted prophet. He has also done a St. John that bids fair for immortality. I tell him that I hope the poets and painters will at last bring the Bible into fashion, and that people will get to like it from taste, though they are insensible to its spirit, and afraid of its doctrines. I love this great genius, for not being ashamed to take his subjects from the most unfashionable of all books.

Keeping bad company leads to all other bad things. I have got the headache to-day, by raking out so late with that gay libertine Johnson. Do *you* know—*I* did not, that he wrote a quarter of the Adventurer? I made him tell me all that he wrote in the "fugitive pieces."

De Lolme told me he thought Johnson's late

political pamphlets were the best things he had written; but I regret that such men should ever write a word of politics.

Mrs. Garrick had obtained a ticket to carry me to the Pantheon with her and a party; but I could not get the better of my repugnance to these sort of places, and she was so good as to excuse me. I find my dislike of what are called public diversions greater than ever, except a play; and when Garrick has left the stage, I could be very well contented to relinquish plays also; and to live in London without ever again setting my foot in a public place.

H. More to one of her Family

HAMPTON, 1776.

I enclose you a little sonnet I sent the Garricks on their birth-day. I had but an hour to write it in, and had the headache, or it would have been better.

SONNET ON MR. AND MRS. GARRICK'S BIRTH-DAY

ADDRESSED TO THE RIVER THAMES, AND WRITTEN IN THE TEMPLE AT HAMPTON

Since first thy green waves through yon meadow stray'd,
O silver Thames, O gentle river, tell,
Hast thou a more harmonious pair survey'd
Than in these fairy-haunted gardens dwell?

I sing not of his muse, for well I ween
My song 's unmarked where every bard approves,
Nor of his magic powers, which must be *seen*,
Not *told*—for telling lessens what it loves :—

Nor do I celebrate her form or face,
Inglorious praise ! for other nymphs are fair,
And other nymphs may boast a transient grace ;
Though they must boast it when she is not there :—

Back to thy source, thou, gentle Thames, shalt flow,
Ere soul more tuned to soul, or mind to mind,
Thy margin ever green shall proudly show,
Or in her bands celestial concord bind.

When I come back from Hampton I shall change my lodgings ; not that I have any particular objections to these, but those I have taken are much more airy, large, and elegant : besides the use, when I please, of the whole house, I shall have a bed-chamber and a dressing-room for my own particular company ; the master and mistress are themselves well-behaved sensible people, and keep good company ; besides, they are fond of books, and can read, and have a shelf of books which they will lend me. The situation is pleasant and healthy —the centre house in the Adelphi. Add to this, it is not a common lodging-house, they are careful whom they take in, and will have no people of bad character, or who keep irregular hours ; so that on the whole, for the little time I remain in town, I think I shall be more comfortable in my new lodgings.

ADELPHI, 1776.

Did I tell you we had a very agreeable day at Mrs. Boscawen's? I like Mr. Berenger[1] prodigiously. I met the Bunbury family at Sir Joshua's. Mr. Boswell (Corsican Boswell) was here last night; he is a very agreeable and good-natured man; he perfectly adores Johnson; they have this day set out together for Oxford, Lichfield, etc., that the Doctor may take leave of all his old friends and acquaintances, previous to his great expedition across the Alps. I lament his undertaking such a journey at his time of life, with beginning infirmities; I hope he will not leave his bones on classic ground. I have here most spacious apartments, three rooms to myself. David Hume is at the point of death in a jaundice. Cadell told me to-day he had circulated six thousand of Price's book, and was rejoiced to hear that the Dean of Gloucester intended to answer it.

ADELPHI, 1776.

We have had a great evening in the Adelphi: the principal people that I can now recollect were, Lord and Lady Camden, their daughters, Lady Chatham and daughters, Lord Dudley, Mr. Rigby, Mrs. Montagu, the Dean of Derry and his lady, Sir Joshua and his sister, Colman, Berenger, etc. etc.

You would take Lord Camden for an elderly

[1] Richard Berenger, Esq., many years Gentleman of the Horse and Equery to his late Majesty. He wrote a history of Horsemanship.

physician, though I think there is something of genius about his nose. Did I excel in the descriptive, here would be a fine field for me to expatiate on the graces of the host and hostess, whose behaviour was all cheerfulness and good breeding: but lords delight not me, no, nor ladies neither, unless they are very chosen ones.

A relation of the Duchess of Chandos died at the Duchess's a few days ago, at the card-table: she was dressed most sumptuously;—they stripped off her diamonds, stuck her upright in a coach, put in two gentlemen with her, and sent her home two hours after she was dead; at least so the story goes.

Baron Burland died as suddenly. After having been at the House of Lords he dined heartily, and was standing by the fire, talking politics to a gentleman. So you see, even London has its warnings if it would but listen to them. These are two signal ones in one week: but the infatuation of the people is beyond anything that can be conceived.

A most magnificent hotel in St. James's Street was opened last night for the first time, by the name of the "Savoir Vivre"; none but people of the very first rank were there, so you may conclude the diversion was cards; and in one night, the very first time the rooms were ever used, the enormous sum of sixty thousand pounds was lost! Heaven reform us!

We had the other night a conversazione at Mrs.

Boscawen's. What a comfort for me that none of my friends play at cards. Soame Jenyns and the learned and ingenious Mr. Cambridge were of the party. We had a few sensible ladies, and a very agreeable day, till the world broke in upon us, and made us too large for conversation. The sensible Mrs. Walsingham was there, as was Mrs. Newton, who gave me many invitations to St. Paul's. Mr. Jenyns was very polite to me, and as he, his lady, and I were the first visitants, he introduced me himself to everybody that came afterwards, who were strangers to me. There is a fine simplicity about him, and a meek innocent kind of wit, in Addison's manner, which is very pleasant. The kind Mrs. Boscawen had made another party for me at her house, with Mr. Berenger, who is everybody's favourite (even Dr. Johnson's), but I am unluckily engaged.

Cumberland's odes are come out. I tried to prevail on Mr. Cambridge to read them, but could not: he has a natural aversion to an ode, as some people have to a cat: one of them is pretty, but another contains a literal description of administering a dose of James's powders! Why will a man who has real talents, attempt a species of writing for which he is so little qualified? But so little do we poor mortals know ourselves, that I should not be surprised, if he were to prefer these odes to his comedies, which have real merit.

London, 1776.

I dined yesterday with Captain and Mrs. Middleton. Tell Dr. Stonehouse that I recommended the translation of Saurin's Sermons to Captain Middleton and Mrs. Bouverie. Captain M. intends writing to the doctor about them. How nobly eloquent they are! One little peculiarity I remark—his more frequent use of the word *vice* than generally occurs in religious writings. I think sin is a theological, vice a moral, and crime a judicial term. There are so few people I meet with in this good town to whom one can venture to recommend sermons, that the opportunity is not to be lost; though the misfortune is, that those who are most willing to read them, happen to be the very people who least want them. Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Carter, and some other of my friends were there.

Mrs. Boscawen came to see me the other day with the duchess, in her gilt chariot, with four footmen (as I hear), for I happened not to be at home. It is not possible for anything on earth to be more agreeable to my taste than my present manner of living. I am so much at my ease; have a great many hours at my own disposal: read my own books, and see my own friends; and, whenever I please, may join the most polished and delightful society in the world! Our breakfasts are little literary societies. There is generally company at meals, as they think it saves time, by avoiding the

necessity of seeing people at other seasons. Mr. Garrick sets the highest value upon his *time* of anybody I ever knew. From dinner to tea we laugh, chat, and talk nonsense: the rest of his time is generally devoted to study. I detest and avoid public places more than ever, and should make a miserably bad fine lady! What most people come to London *for*, would keep me *from* it.

ADELPHI, 1776.

I had promised Mr. Burrows I would certainly go to hear him at St. Clement's last Sunday, but was again disappointed. At Hampton church we heard a frivolous clergyman preach one of those light compositions which it is impossible for one ever to think of again.

Alas! I dare not lie in bed in a morning, for the Garricks are as much my conscience here as the doctor [Stonehouse] is at Bristol. A few evenings ago we were at Mrs. Vesey's; Tessier read; we were a moderate party; not forty: the Duchess Dowager of Beaufort was there, Lady Betty Compton, Lord and Lady Spencer, Lord and Lady Bateman, and a dozen other lords and ladies for aught I know. The old duchess looks amazingly well; I do not know a finer woman of her age.

We expect a large party every minute to breakfast, all the sensible, ingenious French folks, whom I believe I have mentioned before, with Lord North, etc. I find Mr. Boswell called upon you

at Bristol, with Dr. Johnson ; he told me so this morning when he breakfasted here, with Sir William Forbes and Dr. J.

London, 1776.

We have been again spending three days at Hampton. On the first, we were visited by our noble neighbours, the Pembrokes ; and on the third, we dined at Richmond, at Sir Joshua's, with a very agreeable party. It was select, though much too large to please me. There was hardly a person in company that I would not have chosen as eminently agreeable ; but I would not have chosen them all together. Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Elliot, Edmund, Richard, and William Burke, Lord Mahon, David Garrick, and Sir Joshua. We had a great deal of laugh, as there were so many leaders among the patriots, and had a great deal of attacking and defending, with much wit and good humour.

Adelphi, 1776.

I wish it were possible for me to give you the slightest idea of the scene I was present at yesterday. Garrick would make me take his ticket to go to the trial of the Duchess of Kingston ; a sight which, for beauty and magnificence, exceeded anything which those who were never present at a coronation, or a trial by peers, can have the least notion of. Mrs. Garrick and I were in full dress by seven. At eight we went to the Duke of Newcastle's, whose

house adjoins Westminster Hall, in which he has a large gallery, communicating with the apartments in his house. You will imagine the bustle of five thousand people getting into one hall! yet in all this hurry we walked in tranquilly. When they were all seated, and the king-at-arms had commanded silence on pain of imprisonment (which, however, was very ill observed), the gentleman of the black rod was commanded to bring in his prisoner. Elizabeth, calling herself Duchess Dowager of Kingston, walked in, led by black rod and Mr. la Roche, courtseying profoundly to her judges. When she bent, the lord steward called out, "Madam, you may rise"; which was taking her up before she was down. The peers made her a slight bow. The prisoner was dressed in deep mourning; a black hood on her head; her hair modestly dressed and powdered; a black silk sacque, with crape trimmings; black gauze, deep ruffles, and black gloves. The counsel spoke about an hour and a quarter each. Dunning's manner is insufferably bad, coughing and spitting at every three words; but his sense and his expression pointed to the last degree; he made her grace shed bitter tears. I had the pleasure of hearing several of the lords speak, though nothing more than proposals on common things. Among these were Lyttleton, Talbot, Townsend, and Camden. The fair victim had four virgins in white behind the bar. She imitated her great predecessor, Mrs. Rudd, and affected to write very often, though I plainly per-

ceived she only wrote as they do their love epistles on the stage, without forming a letter. I must not omit one of the best things: we had only to open a door, to get at a very fine cold collation of all sorts of meats and wines, with tea, etc., a privilege confined to those who belonged to the Duke of Newcastle. I fancy the peeresses would have been glad of our places at the trial, for I saw Lady Derby and the Duchess of Devonshire with their work-bags full of good things. Their rank and dignity did not exempt them from the "villanous appetites" of eating and drinking.

Foote says that the Empress of Russia, the Duchess of Kingston, and Mrs. Rudd, are the three most extraordinary women in Europe; but the Duchess disdainfully, and I think unjustly, excludes Mrs. Rudd from the honour of deserving to make one in the triple alliance. The Duchess has but small remains of that beauty of which kings and princes were once so enamoured. She looked very much like Mrs. Pritchard; she is large and ill-shaped; there was nothing white but her face, and had it not been for that, she would have looked like a bale of bombazeen. There was a great deal of ceremony, a great deal of splendour, and a great deal of nonsense: they adjourned upon the most foolish pretences imaginable, and did *nothing* with such an air of business as was truly ridiculous. I forgot to tell you the Duchess was taken ill, but performed it badly.

ADELPHI, 1776.

We did not come to town till yesterday, and even then left Hampton with regret, as it is there we spend the pleasantest part of our time, uninterrupted by the idle, the gossipping, and the impertinent. On Tuesday, Lord and Lady Pembroke dined with us. The Countess is a pretty woman, and my Lord a good-humoured, lively, chatty man; but Roscius was, as usual, the life and soul of the company, and always says so many home things, pointed at the vices and follies of those with whom he converses, but in so indirect, well-bred, and good-humoured a manner, that every body must love him; and none but fools are ever offended, or will expose themselves so much as to own they are. Politicians say that there is a great prospect of an accommodation with America. Heaven grant it, before more human blood is spilt! But even this topic has, I think, a little given place to the trial. For my own part, I cannot see why there should be so much ceremony used, to know whether an infamous woman has one or two husbands. I think a *lieutenant de police* would be a better judge for her than the peers, and I do not see why she should not be tried by Sir John Fielding, as a profligate of less note would have been.

ADELPHI, 1776.

I have the great satisfaction of telling you that Elizabeth, calling herself Duchess Dowager of Kingston, was this very afternoon *undignified and*

unduchessed, and very narrowly escaped being burned in the hand. If you have been half as much interested against this unprincipled, artful, licentious woman as I have, you will be rejoiced at it as I am. All the peers, but two or three (who chose to withdraw), exclaimed with great emphasis, "Guilty, upon my honour!" except the Duke of N——, who said, "Guilty erroneously, but not intentionally." Great nonsense, by the bye, but peers are privileged.

On Wednesday, we had a very large party to dinner, consisting chiefly of French persons of distinction and talents, who are come over to take a last look at the beams of the great dramatic sun, before he sets. We had beaux esprits, femmes sçavantes, academicians, etc. and no English person except Mr. Gibbon, the Garricks, and myself. We had not one English sentence the whole day. Last night we were at our friends the Wilmots', in Bloomsbury Square. There was a great deal of good company—the Bishop of Worcester, his lady, Sir Ralph Paine and lady, Mrs. Boscawen, and half a score others.

This morning Lord Camden breakfasted with us. He was very entertaining. He is very angry that the Duchess of Kingston was not burned in the hand. He says, as he was once a professed lover of hers, he thought it would have looked ill-natured and ungallant for him to propose it: but that he should have acceded to it most heartily, though he believes he should have recommended a cold iron.

This evening I am engaged to spend with a foreigner. He is a Dane, unjustly deprived of his father's fortune by his mother's marrying a second time. I have never yet seen him, but I hear that all the world is to be there, which I think is a little unfeeling, as he is low-spirited at times, even to madness. For my part, from what I have heard, I do not think the poor young man will live out the night.

ADELPHI, 1776.

I imagine my last was not so ambiguous but that you saw well enough I staid in town to see Hamlet, and I will venture to say, that it was such an entertainment as will probably never again be exhibited to an admiring world. But this general panegyric can give you no idea of *my* feelings; and particular praise would be injurious to his excellences.

In every part he filled the whole soul of the spectator, and transcended the most finished idea of the poet. The requisites for Hamlet are not only various, but opposed. In him they are all united, and as it were concentrated. One thing I must particularly remark, that, whether in the simulation of madness, in the sinkings of despair, in the familiarity of friendship, in the whirlwind of passion, or in the meltings of tenderness, he never once forgot he was a prince; and in every variety of situation, and transition of feeling, you discovered the highest polish of fine breeding and courtly manners.

Hamlet experiences the conflict of many passions and affections, but filial love ever takes the lead; *that* is the great point from which he sets out, and to which he returns; the others are all contingent and subordinate to it, and are cherished or renounced, as they promote or obstruct the operation of this leading principle. Had you seen with what exquisite art and skill Garrick maintained the subserviency of the less to the greater interests, you would agree with me, of what importance to the perfection of acting, is that consummate good sense which always pervades every part of his performances.

To the most eloquent expression of the eye, to the hand-writing of the passions on his features, to a sensibility which tears to pieces the hearts of his auditors, to powers so unparalleled, he adds a judgment of the most exquisite accuracy, the fruit of long experience and close observation, by which he preserves every gradation and transition of the passions, keeping all under the control of a just dependence and natural consistency. So naturally, indeed, do the ideas of the poet seem to mix with his own, that he seemed himself to be engaged in a succession of affecting situations, not giving utterance to a speech, but to the instantaneous expression of his feelings, delivered in the most affecting tones of voice, and with gestures that belong only to nature. It was a fiction as delightful as fancy, and as touching as truth. A few nights before I saw him in "Abel Drugger"; and had I

not seen him in both, I should have thought it as possible for Milton to have written "Hudibras," and Butler "Paradise Lost," as for one man to have played "Hamlet" and "Drugger" with such excellence.

I found myself, not only in the best place, but with the best company in the house, for I sat next the orchestra, in which were a number of my acquaintance (and those no vulgar names) Edmund and Richard Burke, Dr. Warton, and Sheridan.

Have you seen an ode to Mr. Pinchbeck, by the author of the "Heroic Epistle"? There is a little slight sarcasm on Cumberland, the Dean of Gloucester, and Dr. Johnson. There is something of wit in it, but I think it is by no means worthy of the author of the "Heroic Epistle," which is, in my opinion, the best satire, both for matter and versification, that has appeared since the "Dunciad." I do not include Johnson's two admirable imitations of "Juvenal," which are more in the manner of Pope's other satires.

H. More to the Rev. Dr. Stonehouse

[Adelphi], *May*, 1776.

. . . I have at last had the entire satisfaction to see Garrick in "Hamlet." I would not wrong him or myself so much as to tell you what I think of it; it is sufficient that you have seen him; I pity those who have not. Posterity will never be able to form the slightest idea of his pretensions. The more I

see him, the more I wonder and admire. Whenever he does anything capital, they are so kind as to get me into the pit, which increases the pleasure ten-fold. He has acted all his comic characters for the last time. I have seen him within these three weeks take leave of Benedict, Sir John Brute, Kitely, Abel Drugger, Archer, and Leon. It seems to me, on these occasions, as if I had been assisting at the funeral obsequies of the different poets. I feel almost as much pain as pleasure. He is quite happy in the prospect of his release.

Miss H. More to Mrs. Gwatkin

ADELPHI, *May* 12, 1776.

A few nights before I saw Garrick in Hamlet, I had seen him in Abel Drugger ; and, had I not seen him in both, I should have thought that it would have been as impossible for Milton to have written "Hudibras," and Butler "Paradise Lost," as for the same man to have played Hamlet and Drugger with such superlative and finished excellence. The more admirable he is, the more painful it is to reflect that I am now catching his departing glories. He is one of those summer suns, which shine brightest at their setting. Within these three weeks, he has appeared in Brute, Leon, Drugger, Benedict, Archer, etc. for the last time ; and it appears like assisting at the funeral obsequies of these individual characters. When I see him play any part for the last time, I can only compare my mixed sensations

of pain and pleasure to what I suppose I should feel, if a friend were to die and leave me a rich legacy. There is a certain sentiment of gratification and delight in the acquisition ; but as you are beginning to indulge in it, it is all of a sudden checked, by recollecting on what terms you possess it, and that you purchase your pleasure at the costly price of losing him to whom you owe it.

I wrote the above two or three days ago, and intended to have sent it immediately ; but happening to show it to Mrs. G. she was so pleased with my remarks on Hamlet and the performance, that they insisted on having a copy. Though they paid my foolish letter an undeserved compliment, yet I could not refuse to comply, and not having time to transcribe it, is the reason you did not hear from me sooner.

I am surprised to find myself still here. Could I have had the least idea of my remaining so long after I wrote to you last, I should not foolishly have deprived myself of the satisfaction of hearing from you. But though I have not heard *from* you, I have frequently heard *of* you. I fancy my sisters will have set out on their western excursion before I shall see Bristol. I doubt not but they will find it a very pleasant scheme, and to Martha I hope it will be a beneficial one.

I last night saw Don Felix for the first time ; it is an elegant and pleasing part, but Mrs. Yates did great injustice to the general character of Violante, in which Mrs. Barry got so much reputation, when

she played it with Mr. Garrick. On Monday night he played King Lear, and it is literally true that my spirits have not yet recovered from the shock they sustained. I generally think the last part I see him in the greatest: but in regard to that night, it was the universal opinion that it was one of the greatest scenes ever exhibited. I called to-day in Leicester Fields, and Sir Joshua declared it was full three days before he got the better of it. The eagerness of people to see him is beyond any thing you can have an idea of. You will see half a dozen duchesses and countesses of a night, in the upper boxes: for the fear of not seeing him at all, has humbled those who used to go, not for the purpose of seeing, but of being seen; and they now courtsey to the ground for the worst places in the house.

I dined lately with your neighbour, Mr. Elliot, whom I like exceedingly: Mr. Gibbon, the three Burkes, Lord Mahon, and Lord Pitt were of the party. What a list of patriots! A few nights ago, we had an agreeable evening at Mrs. Vesey's; you know she is a favourite of mine, and indeed of every body that has the pleasure of knowing her.

We go to-morrow to smell the lilacs and syringas at Hampton. I long for the sweet tranquillity of that delicious retreat. We generally spend a day or two in a week there, particularly Sunday, which is no small relief to me.

How does your garden grow? Are your shrubs flourishing? I reckon the Bristol misses will be delighted with your charming prospect. My love

to squire Edward. I have not time to look over this scrawl. My kind regards at the vicarage. Adieu, dear Madam,

Yours constantly and sincerely,

H. More.

I have been to the Adelphi. Garrick gave me the history of his reading to the king and queen, and went through the fable of the "Blackbird and Royal Eagle," which was his prologue. It is really very lively and entertaining. Some part of it is affecting, where he speaks of the sprightly blackbird, who was famous for his imitative powers, and could exactly mimic from the tender notes of the nightingale, to the low comic noises of the crow and magpie. But one day, happening to look on his once glossy plumage, he found that his feathers began to turn grey; his eye had lost its lustre; and he also began to be lame. This determined him to give up his mimicry, and he resolved to be silent, and not hop about from tree to tree, but confine himself to one snug bush. The royal eagle, however, hearing of the talents of the lively creature, sent for him to court, and insisted on hearing him sing. This honour overturned all his prudent resolution; he found his feathers were restored to their native black, his eye resumed its fire, and he was himself again.

London, 1776.

Yesterday, good and dear Mrs. Boscawen came herself to fetch me to meet at dinner a lady I have

long wished to see. This was Mrs. Delany. She was a Granville, and niece to the celebrated poet Lord Lansdowne. She was the friend and intimate of Swift. She tells a thousand pleasant anecdotes relative to the publication of the Tatler. As to the Spectator, it is almost too modern for her to speak of it. She was in the next room, and heard the cries of alarm when Guiscard stabbed Lord Oxford. In short, she is a living library of knowledge ; and time, which has so highly matured her judgment, has taken very little from her graces or her liveliness. She has invited me to visit her ; a singular favour from one of her years and character. Last night, I was again at Mrs. Boscawen's, where there was a splendid assembly : there were above forty people, most of them of the first quality, but I am sure I shall not remember half of them.

I forgot to tell you I have just been to see Mrs. Montagu. I made it a point to go in the morning ; thinking I might stand a chance of catching her alone, which indeed, to my great delight, I did ; but just as we were beginning to enter into interesting conversation, the world, as usual, broke in.

H. More to Mr. Garrick

June 10, 1776.

I have devoured the newspapers for the last week with the appetite of a famished politician, to learn if my general had yet laid down arms ; but I find you go on with a true American spirit, destroy-

ing thousands of his Majesty's liege subjects, breaking the limbs of many, and the hearts of all. When I promised you I would not plague you with any of my nonsense till you were disengaged, could I possibly divine you would be so very good as to honour me with a letter?—aye, and a charming letter too, albeit a little one—it made me so proud and happy! But you are so used to make folks proud and happy that it is nothing to you; and what would be a violent effort to other people, slides naturally into your ordinary course of action.

I think, by the time this reaches you, I may congratulate you on the end of your labours and the completion of your fame—a fame which has had no parallel, and will have no end. Yet whatever reputation the world may ascribe to you, I, who have had the happy privilege of knowing you intimately, shall always think you derived your greatest glory from the temperance with which you enjoyed it, and the true greatness of mind with which you lay it down. Surely, to have suppressed your talents in the moment of your highest capacity for exercising them, does as much honour to your heart as the exertion itself did to your dramatic character; but I cannot trust myself with this subject, because I am writing to the man himself; yet I ought to be indulged, for is not the recollection of my pleasures all that is left me of them? Have I not seen in one season that man act seven-and-twenty times, and rise each time in

excellence, and shall I be silent? Have I not spent three months under the roof of that man and his dear charming lady, and received from them favours that would take me another three months to tell over, and shall I be silent?

But highly as I enjoy your glory (for I do enjoy it most heartily, and seem to partake it too, as I think some rays of it fall on all your friends) yet I tremble for your health. It is impossible you can do so much mischief to the nerves of other people without hurting your own—in Richard especially, where your murders are by no means confined to the Tower; but you assassinate all such of your audience as have hearts. I say I tremble lest you should suffer for all this; but it is now over, as I hope are the bad effects of it upon yourself. You may break your wand at the end of your trial, when you lay down the office of haut intendant of the passions; but the enchantment it raised you can never break, while the memories and feelings remain of those who were ever admitted into the magic circle.

This letter is already of a good impudent length, and to the person, of all others, who has the least time to read nonsense. I will not prolong my impertinence, but to beg and conjure that I may hear a little bit about your finishing night. The least scrap—printed or manuscript—paragraph or advertisement—merry or serious—verse or prose, will be thankfully received, and hung up in the temple of reliques.

Pray tell my sweet Mrs. Garrick I live on the hope of hearing from her. And tell her further that she and you have performed a miracle, for you have loaded one person with obligations, and have not made an ingrate.

Viva V. M. mille annos.

H. More to one of her Family

BUNGAY, 1777.

We arrived at Bungay a little before nine. In my way thither, Thorpe Hall, where my father was born, was pointed out to me. Our cousin Cotton's house is about a quarter of a mile out of the town; it is large, elegant, and very handsomely furnished. Bungay is a much better town than I expected, very clean, and pleasant. I am very glad, however, that the house is a little way out of it.

On Tuesday, we went to dine at Mr. John Cotton's, a romantic farm-house, buried in the obscurity of a deep wood. A great number of Cottons were assembled, of all ages, sexes, and characters. The old lady of the house told me that my father lay at her brother's house the last night he spent in this country. She took a great deal of pains to explain to me genealogies, alliances, and intermarriages, not one word of which can I remember. The table and the guests groaned with the hospitality of the entertainers, and we had wines that would not have disgraced the table of a Bristol alderman. I am at a loss what to do about the book

which I hear Baretti has sent me. As I have not seen it, I know not what to say. It is but cold satisfaction to an author to be thanked for his book, unless he is complimented for it too ; and when an author really deserves praise, nothing is more delightful or more proper than to give it. A slowness to applaud betrays a cold temper, or an envious spirit. I am very well. I eat brown bread and custards like a native ; and we have a pretty, agreeable, laudable custom of getting tipsy twice a day upon Herefordshire cider. The other night, we had a great deal of company, eleven damsels, to say nothing of men. I protest I hardly do them justice, when I pronounce that they had, amongst them, on their heads, an acre and a half of shrubbery, besides slopes, grass-plats, tulip-beds, clumps of peonies, kitchen-gardens, and green-houses. Mrs. Cotton and I had an infinite deal of entertainment out of them, though, to our shame be it spoken, some of them were cousins ; but I have no doubt that they held in great contempt our roseless heads, and leafless necks.

H. More to her Sister

HAMPTON, 1777.

As soon as I got to London, I drove straight to the Adelphi, where to my astonishment I found a coach waiting for me to carry me to Hampton.

Upon my arrival here I was immediately put in possession of my old chamber. Garrick is all good

humour, vivacity and wit. While I think of it, I must treat you with a little distich which Mrs. Barbauld wrote extempore, on my showing my Felix Buckles (the elegant buckles which Garrick wore the last time he ever acted the part of Don Felix, and with which he presented me as a relic).

"Thy buckles, O Garrick, thy friend may now use,
But no mortal hereafter shall tread in thy shoes."

Last Wednesday we went to town for a night, when Dr. Burney sat an hour or two with us. We have had a great deal of company here, lords, ladies, wits, critics, and poets. Last Saturday we had a very agreeable day. Our party consisted of about twelve; for these dear people understand society too well ever to have very large parties. The Norfolk Windham, Sheridan, and Lord Palmerston said the most lively things. But Roscius surpassed himself, and literally kept the table in a roar for four hours. He told his famous story of "Jack Pocklington" in a manner so entirely new, and so infinitely witty, that the company have done nothing but talk of it ever since. I have often heard of this story: it is of a person who came to offer himself for the stage, with an impediment in his speech. He gives the character, too, in as strong a manner as Fielding could have done.

After supper, on Sunday, Garrick read to us, out of Paradise Lost, that fine part on diseases and old age. Dr. Cadogan and his agreeable daughter

have spent a day and a night here. The Doctor gave me some lectures on anatomy, and assures me that I am now as well acquainted with secretion, concoction, digestion, and assimilation, as many a wise-looking man in a great wig. We go, on Friday, into Hampshire, to Mr. Wilmot's. Lord and Lady Bathurst are to be of the party. I should be apt to suspect that the presence of a lord-chancellor was not very likely to contribute to mirth; but I don't think all the great officers of state put together could have gravity enough to damp the fire of Garrick, or blunt the edge of his wit. As soon as we return from Farnborough Place, I shall quit the rosy bowers of Hampton, and conclude my very long and pleasant campaign.

From the same to the same

FARNBOROUGH PLACE, 1777.

We reached this place yesterday morning. You will judge of the size of the house, when I tell you there are eleven visitors, and all perfectly well accommodated. The Wilmots live in the greatest magnificence; but what is a much better thing, they live also rationally and sensibly. On Sunday evening, however, I was a little alarmed; they were preparing for music (sacred music was the *ostensible* thing), but before I had time to feel uneasy, Garrick turned round, and said, "Nine, you are a *Sunday woman*; retire to your room—I will recall you when the music is over."

The *great seal* disappointed us, but we have Lady Bathurst, Lady Catherine Apsley, Dr. Kennicott, the Hebrew professor of Oxford, his wife, a very agreeable woman (though she copies Hebrew), besides the Garricks and two or three other very clever people. We live with the utmost freedom and ease imaginable, walking all together, or in small parties, chatting, reading, or scribbling, just as we like. We are now come to town on business. I shall set out for Bristol on Friday.

H. More to her Sister

LONDON, 1778.

To-morrow I go to Hampton ; I dread catching cold, as I have not ventured down stairs ; the doctor violently opposes my going, as he has the most exalted opinion of my indiscretion. Mrs. Garrick and he battled an hour about the propriety of it. As he found we were both secretly resolved, he made a virtue of necessity, and gave the leave we were determined to take. He told us he expected I should be brought back half-dead with feasting, and indolence, and luxury, and imprudence ; but at last he consented on condition that I should be well furred and flannelled, live maigre, and drink no wine.

We have been here a week ; Mrs. Sheridan is with us, and her husband comes down on evenings. I find I have mistaken this lady ; she is unaffected and sensible ; converses and reads extremely well,

and writes prettily. To be sure there may be wiser parties in the world than ours, but I question if there is one more cheerful. Ought one to own it, that the great English Roscius, and the best English dramatic poet (to say nothing of the ladies, who set up for something too)—that these great geniuses, I say, sit up till midnight, playing at cross-purposes, crooked answers, and what 's my thought like ? you never heard a set of wits utter half so much nonsense !

I dined to-day in the Adelphi : we were very comfortable. Garrick read a good deal, and would insist upon my reading a poem, which I told him I would not do to prevent a French war. Saturday Lady Juliana Penn spent the afternoon with me : I like her much ; she bears her misfortunes (the loss of the government of a vast province, and twenty thousand a year) with the constancy of a great mind.

I was last night in some fine company. One lady asked what was the newest colour ; the other answered that the most truly fashionable silk was a soupçon de vert, lined with a *soupir étouffé et brodée de l'espérance* ; now you must not consult your old-fashioned dictionary for the word *espérance*, for you will there find that it means nothing but hope, whereas espérance in the new language of the times means rose-buds. I dined the other day at Mrs. Leveson's, and spent the afternoon at Mrs. Boscawen's with the Duchess of Beaufort.

As you love to see all my nonsense, I enclose a

few lines I sent to Mrs. Boscawen the other day, with a little bottle of otto of roses.

Too gross are my senses, too vulgar my nose is,
For perfume of jasmine or essence of roses;
To you 'tis more suited, whose organs I find,
Partake the refinement that graces your mind.

Had the phial, dear Madam, I now send to you,
Been the phial which held the Diable Boiteux,
The spirit in prison no more would complain,
Nor solicit the scholar to free him again.

When laid on your toilet, and kept in your sight,
How mortals would envy the fate of the sprite,
Not a soul but would wish of his place to make trial,
And each beau would be cramming himself in a phial.

And why not in this? for deep chymists, 'tis said,
Can draw forth a spirit from feathers or lead—
Nay from butterflies too; and how do we know,
But this essence of scents is a liquefied beau?

H. More to Mrs. Gwatkin

August 9, 1778.

My dear Madam,

I received your favour on Saturday, and though I could not but be infinitely *concerned* at the melancholy cause of your sudden departure, yet I cannot say I was the least *surprised* at it, as it is easy to imagine what effects the dangerous state of a deservedly beloved child must have on a heart so exquisitely alive to all the maternal feelings. What a journey of hurry, anxiety, and fatigue, you must

have had! I hope you did not undertake it alone. I am very impatient to learn how you found Master Gwatkin, and what his medical friends think of him. I rejoice that he is in such good hands; if there is efficacy in human art, I doubt not of his recovery, having been myself so many times snatched from the devouring jaws of death by the friendly assistance he now receives. God grant it may be as beneficial to him!

I wrote to you, Madam, last Friday, not knowing of your migration. I hope they will not send you the letter, as it is of no consequence now, containing only the particulars relative to my dear little friend, of which you have now so much better information. When your letter was brought, I was upon a visit in the neighbourhood, where it was sent me. There were ten ladies and a clergyman. I was pleased with the assemblage, thinking the vanity of the *sex* would meet with its equilibrium in the wisdom of the *profession*;—that the brilliant sallies of female wit and sprightliness would be corrected and moderated by the learned gravity and judicious conversation of the Rev. Theologue. I looked upon the latter as the centripetal, acting against the centrifugal force of the former, who would be kept within their orbit of decorum by his means. For about an hour nothing was uttered but *words*, which are almost an equivalent to nothing. The gentleman had not yet spoken. The *ladies*, with loud vociferations, seemed to *talk* much without *thinking* at all. The gentleman, with all

the male stupidity of silent recollection, without saying a single syllable, seemed to be acting over the pantomime of thought. I cannot say, indeed, that his countenance so much belied his understanding, as to express any thing: no! let me not do him that injustice; he might have sat for the picture of insensibility. I endured his taciturnity, thinking that the longer he was in collecting, adjusting, and arranging his ideas, the more would he charm me with the tide of his eloquence, when the materials of his conversation were ready for display: but, alas! it never occurred that I have seen an *empty* bottle corked as well as a *full* one. After sitting another hour, I thought I perceived in him signs of pregnant sentiment, which was just on the point of being delivered in speech. I was extremely exhilarated at this, but it was a false alarm; he essayed it not. At length the imprisoned powers of rhetoric burst through the shallow mounds of torpid silence and reserve, and he remarked, with equal acuteness of wit, novelty of invention, and depth of penetration, that—"we had had no summer." Then, shocked at his own loquacity, he doubled-locked the door of his lips, "*and word spoke never more.*"

Will you not say I am turning devotee when I tell you what my amusements, of the reading kind, are. I have read through all the epistles three times since I have been here; the ordinary translation, Locke's Paraphrase, and a third put into very elegant English (I know not by whom), in

which St. Paul's obscurities are elucidated, and Harwood's pomp of words avoided. I am also reading " West on the Resurrection " ; in my poor judgment a most excellent thing, calculated to confound all the cavils of the infidel, and to confirm all the hopes of the believer. Have you heard from the sweet little Cornwallian since you left her ? My most affectionate regards to my dear Master Lovell, and earnest wishes for his speedy recovery.

I am, my dear Madam,
With the most perfect esteem,
Your ever obliged and affectionate
humble servant,
H. More.

H. More to her Sister

Adelphi, *Feb.* 2, 1779.

We (Miss Cadogan and myself) went to Charing Cross to see the melancholy procession.[1] Just as we got there we received a ticket from the Bishop of Rochester, to admit us into the Abbey. No admittance could be obtained but under his hand. We hurried away in a hackney coach, dreading to be too late. The bell of St. Martin's and the Abbey gave a sound that smote upon my very soul. When we got to the cloisters, we found multitudes striving for admittance. We gave our ticket, and were let in, but unluckily we ought to have kept it. We

[1] Garrick's funeral.

followed the man who unlocked a door of iron, and directly closed it upon us, and two or three others, and we found ourselves in a tower, with a dark winding staircase, consisting of half a hundred stone steps. When we got to the top there was no way out; we ran down again, called, and beat the door till the whole pile resounded with our cries. Here we staid half an hour in perfect agony; we were sure it would be all over: nay, we might never be let out; we might starve; we might perish. At length our clamours brought an honest man—a guardian angel I then thought him. We implored him to take care of us, and get us into a part of the abbey whence we might see the grave. He asked for the Bishop's ticket; we had given it away to the wrong person; and he was not obliged to believe we ever had one; yet he saw so much truth in our grief, that though we were most shabby, and a hundred fine people were soliciting the same favour, he took us under each arm—carried us safely through the crowd, and put us in a little gallery directly over the grave, where we could see and hear everything as distinctly as if the Abbey had been a parlour. Little things sometimes affect the mind strongly! We were no sooner recovered from the fresh burst of grief than I cast my eyes, the first thing, on Handel's monument and read the scroll in his hand, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Just at three the great doors burst open with a noise that shook the roof: the organ struck up, and the whole choir,

in strains only less solemn than the "archangel's trump," began Handel's fine anthem. The whole choir advanced to the grave, in hoods and surplices, singing all the way: then Sheridan, as chief-mourner; then the body (alas! whose body!), with ten noblemen and gentlemen, pall-bearers; then the rest of the friends and mourners; hardly a dry eye—the very players, bred to the trade of counterfeiting, shed genuine tears.

As soon as the body was let down, the bishop began the service, which he read in a low, but solemn and devout manner. Such an awful stillness reigned, that every word was audible. How I felt it! Judge if my heart did not assent to the wish, that the soul of our dear brother now departed was in peace. And this is all of Garrick! Yet a very little while, and he shall "say to the worm, Thou art my brother; and to corruption, thou art my mother and my sister." So passes away the fashion of this world. And the very night he was buried, the playhouses were as full, and the Pantheon was as crowded, as if no such thing had happened: nay, the very mourners of the day partook of the revelries of the night—the same night too!

As soon as the crowd was dispersed, our friend came to us with an invitation from the bishop's lady, to whom he had related our disaster, to come into the deanery. We were carried into her dressing room, but being incapable of speech, she very kindly said she would not interrupt such sorrow,

and left us; but sent up wine, cakes, and all manner of good things, which was really well-timed. I caught no cold, notwithstanding all I went through.

On Wednesday night we came to the Adelphi—to this house! She bore it with great tranquillity; but what was my surprise to see her go alone into the chamber and bed, in which he had died that day fortnight. She had a delight in it beyond expression. I asked her the next day how she went through it? She told me very well: that she first prayed with great composure, then went and kissed the dear bed, and got into it with a sad pleasure.

H. More to Mrs. Boscawen

BRISTOL, *August* 3, 1780.

MY DEAR MADAM,

You do not forbid me to write to you; I therefore venture to do it without apology, and, albeit I am but little worthy of the honour, I am sensible, truly sensible of the happiness. Every letter I joyfully catch hold of, as a full and reasonable pretence to trouble you *de nouveau* with my nonsense. I think I once ventured to assert, and I believe you did not contradict it, that places made a considerable change in opinions, and that a composition or a companion which we should think insupportable in town, will do very passably in the country. In consequence of this doctrine, I venture to send you a copy of a

paltry ode; though, in allowing for the operation of local circumstances on the mind, I am well aware I ought to have made the same exception in favour of Glanvilla, which you once did in behalf of Hampton. If the enclosed stanzas do not prove my wit (and I think it is pretty clear that they will not), they will at least show the opinion I have of your disposition to forgive, and my readiness to furnish you with occasions for exerting it.

And so, Madam, you sometimes sit under the oak where Pope sat? No Druid ever venerated that hallowed plant, or its more hallowed misseltoe, on account of the spirit it enclosed, as I should venerate this from admiration of the spirit it once sheltered! And so you live in shades, and read Gibbon! He is an entertaining and philosophical historian, yet as Ganganelli said to Count Algarotti, "I wish these shining wits, in spite of all their philosophy, would manage matters so, that one might hope to meet them in heaven; for one is very sorry to be deprived of such agreeable company to all eternity." For my own part, I am willing to compound for less wit, and more faith, though I agree with Mr. Jenyns, that it requires an infinite degree of credulity to be an infidel.

I return at intervals to my charming book, with all the eagerness of a glutton. I went through it with more than pleasure—with enthusiasm. I had always a passion for Gray, which his letters are calculated to increase. His poetry is so exquisite, that the delight I felt in reading him is generally

mixed with regret that he wrote so little ; a sentiment which would diminish the pleasure of it, were it not so perfect as to admit of no diminution.

Though my great admiration of the poetical works of Gray had made me form the highest expectations of his letters, yet my ideas were all fulfilled upon reading them. In my poor opinion they possess all the graces and all the ease which I apprehend ought to distinguish this familiar species of composition. They have also another and a higher excellence ; the temper and spirit he almost constantly discovers in the unguarded confidence and security of friendship, will rank him among the most amiable of men ; as his charming verses will give him a place among the first of lyric poets. The pleasure one feels on reading the letters of great and eminent persons, is of a very different kind from that which one receives from their more elaborate works ; it is being admitted, as it were, to their very closets and bosoms : whereas the other is only being received in their drawing-rooms on state-days. In the present work, Mr. Mason shows himself to be something better than a good poet : never was there a more generous editor or more faithful friend ! What an exquisite pleasure does he take in doing honour to the departed ! May his own fame meet with such a guardian, and his own life with such a biographer.

I am also plunged deep in the Lusiad, and am now as much interested in the fortunes of the brave and pious Gama, as ever I was in those of the wander-

ing Greek, *Qui mores hominum multorum vidit.* I began to fear all the enthusiasm was dead, it not having given any signs of life for a long time ; but Camoens and Mickle, between them, have contrived to rouse a small portion of it ; so that whether it was actually dead, or whether, like the god Baal, it was sleeping, or gone a journey, I cannot tell.

I have looked over *Monsieur* Shakspeare, as you properly call it. Don't you think it has a vast deal of merit ? But how miserably inadequate must a translation of Shakspeare ever be ! There is the stature, but where is the grace ?—the shape, but where is the mien ?—the features, but where is the eye—

Glancing from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth ?

There is the body, but where is the living spirit, the animating principle ? It is here, as well as in divine things, that " the letter killeth." Yet I honour the Comte de Camelan and his associates. What lover of Shakspeare but *must* honour them ? It would be an invidious task to glean up two or three trifling mistakes, when we ought rather to wonder at finding so few.

My dear and excellent friends Mrs. E. Bouverie, Captain and Mrs. Middleton, and Mrs. Lloyd, have been at Clifton ever since my return, which has been very agreeable to me. We are in daily expectation of a visit from —— ——, which we are promised by the last post.

Adieu, my dearest Madam, I wish you perfect

health, and sunless bowers, which I conceive to be a very characteristic dog-day wish. You anticipated for me *les chaleurs caniculaires*, and mitigated them by your sweet pretty fan.

Your most obedient and obliged
H. More.

H. More to her Sister

London, 1781.

On Friday I was at a great dinner at Mr. Middleton's; the company was numerous; it threatened therefore to be dull; but I had a great deal of agreeable conversation with the Bishop of Chester (Dr. Porteus), who is an excellent critic, and perfectly to my taste; he is, moreover, I believe, a very good man. I hope great popularity, and the estimation in which his company is held, will not spoil him, nor make him relax; it requires a steady head to stand so high without being giddy. We little folks below, that walk quietly in the vale, know nothing of the danger, and are therefore pert and censorious.

I have often said, I do not know so hard a trade as pleasure, if it be well followed. I am quite tired of visiting, and yet I do not go to a quarter of the places I am asked to. I never knew a great party turn out so pleasantly as the other night at the Pepys's. There was all the pride of London—every wit and every wit-ess; though these, when they get into a cluster, I have sometimes found

to be as dull as other people; but the spirit of the evening was kept up on the strength of a little lemonade, till past eleven, without cards, scandal, or politics. Mrs. Boscawen threw me into no small confusion; she got among the men, not less than twenty, all Beaux Esprits, and gave them all, privately, Bishop Lowth's verses to read.

A very affecting circumstance happened yesterday. Mrs. Garrick and I were invited to an assembly at Mrs. Thrale's. There was to be a fine concert, and all the fine people were to be there; but the chief object was to meet the Brahmin and the two Parsees, and I promised myself no small pleasure in seeing the disciples of the ancient Zoroaster, for such these are, and worshippers of fire. Just as my hair was dressed, in came a servant to forbid our coming, for that Mr. Thrale was dead! A very few hours later, and he would have died in this assembly. What an awful event! He was in the prime of life, but had the misfortune to be too rich, and to keep too sumptuous a table, at which he indulged too freely. He was a sensible and respectable man. I am glad the poor lady has in her distress such a friend as Dr. Johnson; he will suggest the best motives of consolation.

The other night we were at a very great and full assembly. My distaste of these scenes of insipid magnificence I have not words to tell. Every faculty but the sight is starved, and that has a surfeit. I like conversation parties when

they are of the right sort, and I do not care whether it be composed of four, or forty persons, because if you know and like the generality of them, nothing is more easy than to pick out a snug pleasant corner ; whereas it is impossible to do so, when two or three hundred people are continually coming in, popping a courtesy, exhibiting their fine persons, and popping out again, or nailing themselves down to a card table.

LONDON, 1781.

I was last Monday at a meeting at the Bishop of St. Asaph's, where were all the brides, Duncannon and Althorp ; and I had the pleasure of a vast deal of snug chat with the Bishop, Mr. Walpole, Mrs. Montagu, and Mrs. Carter.

Mrs. Kennicott tells me Bishop Lowth insists upon my publishing " Sensibility," and all my other poems collected, immediately, that people may have them altogether. The Dean of Gloucester has sent me his book against Locke, splendidly bound. I have not yet had the manners to write and thank him for it. I am afraid it will draw upon him a number of enemies and answers, which at his time of life cannot be very agreeable. I believe where the spirit of controversy has once possessed the mind, no time can weaken it.

I was on Monday night at a very snug little party at Mr. Ramsay's. He has written an Essay on the Harmony of Numbers, and on Versification. He wished me to hear it read, and convened a small party of wits. It is scientific and ingenious, but

I do not allow him his positions, and very pertly told him so, for he seems to set written rules above the " nicely-judging ear," which I will never allow ; and he denies Pope to have been an excellent harmonist, which I will never allow neither. On Friday I dined at Mrs. Boscawen's, only we two. We had a snug day, and a deal of that social cordial chat, that is so preferable to all the mummery of great parties. At eight I went to Lady ——'s large assembly, which was very magnificently dull.

Tuesday we were a small and very choice party at Bishop Shipley's. Lord and Lady Spencer, Lord and Lady Althorp, Sir Joshua, Langton, Boswell, Gibbon, and to my agreeable surprize, Dr. Johnson, were there.

Mrs. Garrick and he had never met since her bereavement. I was heartily disgusted with Mr. Boswell, who came up stairs after dinner, much disordered with wine, and addressed me in a manner which drew from me a sharp rebuke, for which I fancy he will not easily forgive me. Johnson came to see us the next morning, and made us a long visit. On Mrs. Garrick's telling him she was always more at her ease with persons who had suffered the same loss with herself, he said that was a comfort she could seldom have, considering the superiority of his merit, and the cordiality of their union. He bore his strong testimony to the liberality of Garrick. He reproved me with pretended sharpness for reading " Les Pensées de Pascal," or any of the Port Royal authors ; alleging

that as a good Protestant, I ought to abstain from books written by Catholics. I was beginning to stand upon my defence, when he took me with both hands, and with a tear running down his cheeks, "Child," said he, with the most affecting earnestness, "I am heartily glad that you read pious books, by whomsoever they may be written."

H. More to one of her Family

HAMPTON, *Dec.* 24, 1781.

Poor Ayrey dropped down dead a few days ago! He was the only atheist I ever knew; but what I thought particularly argued a wrong judgment in him was this, that he was an honest, good-natured man, which certainly he should not have been on his principles. He was a fatalist, and if he snuffed the candle, or stirred the fire, or took snuff, he solemnly protested he was compelled to do it; and it did not depend on his own discretion, whether he should buckle his shoe, or tie his garter. If I did not know him well, I would not have believed there had existed such a character. He always confessed he was a coward, and had a natural fear of pain and death, though he knew he should be as if he had never been. I cannot think of him without horror and compassion. He knows by this time whether a future state was really such a ridiculous invention of priestcraft and superstition, as he always said it was.

I met at dinner the other day, at Mrs. Boscawen's,

Lady Smith; she is dowager of the pious Lord Chief Baron; really an excellent good woman, though a little uncharitable in her opinions about others; she said my friend was the best *natural* woman she had ever known.

H. More to her Sister

HAMPTON, *Jan.* 17, 1782.

How does poor wretched Louisa? You have not sent me the halfpenny "Tale of Woe" which I wrote; it may be of use in procuring subscriptions. Mrs. Garrick and I go to London before Wednesday. She, to her mass, and I, to my mantua-maker—she to be daubed with ashes, and I to be decorated with vanities. And now we are upon vanities, what do you think is the reigning mode as to powder!—only turmerick, that coarse dye which stains yellow. The Goths and Vandals, the Picts and Saxons are come again. It falls out of the hair and stains the skin so, that every pretty lady must look as yellow as a crocus; which I suppose will become a better compliment than as white as a lily. I have just made a very important discovery in poetical antiquities, which I hereby make a present of to all the commentators upon Virgil, every one of whom it has escaped; it is this—that the dish the wandering Trojans eat first on the Latian shore was a flap-jack; it could be nothing else, and the pretty childish remark of that great hungry boy, Master Ascanias (that they had eaten

their tables), means nothing more than that they devoured the bottom crust on which the apples were baked. I hope you will allow there is a great critical acumen, and much recondite learning in this remark, which I think will pass muster with some of Warburton's.

I yesterday returned Mr. Strahan the last proof of my book ; I suppose it will be out in a few days, though I do not know when, nor do I even know what is to be the price. I trust all to Cadell's prudence. I have desired him to charge it as low as he can. I actually feel very awkward about this new book. Strangers who read it will, I am afraid, think I am good ; and I would not willingly appear better than I am, which is certainly the case with all who do not act as seriously as they write. I think sometimes of what Prior makes Solomon say of himself in his fallen state—" They brought my proverbs to confute my life."

ADELPHI, *Feb.* 17, 1782.

I met yesterday, at Mrs. ——'s, the Bishop of Chester and Mrs. Porteus. The Bishop inquired very much when the book [1] was to appear, to my no small confusion, for the reason I am going to give. The book lay on Mrs. Boscawen's table, and we had just discovered a most ridiculous blunder, for by the misplacing of a single asterisk, the bishop is made a painter, and Sir Joshua Reynolds a bishop.

[1] Sacred Dramas ; with the Poem on Sensibility in the same volume. The work has passed through nineteen editions.

Neither Mrs. B. nor I had courage to mention this, so I very foolishly only said, I could not tell when it would be published. I have sent the history of this blunder to Cadell, and with a dash of a pen it is tolerably rectified.

After all, the kindest thing to my friends is *not* to send them a book ; for a present from the author is very inconvenient, as I have often found to my cost ; since it forces the person so distinguished to write against their conscience, and to praise what perhaps they secretly despise. Besides, as I have mentioned all my poetical friends, it would be rather awkward, after offering the incense, to thrust the censer in their faces.

H. More to Mrs. Boscawen

[Bath], 1782.

My dear Madam,

" Les morts n'écrivent point," says Madame de Maintenon. And yet Mrs. Rowe, who was, I opine, a much better Christian (albeit a little too fanciful), has flatly contradicted this assertion, by *making* them write. However, maugre my veneration for the English lady, I beg, my dear Madam, that you will be pleased to adopt the assertion of the French one, " que les morts n'écrivent point," and for the same reason too, namely, " que je me contois de leur nombre."

You see, my dear Madam, the extent of your influence over me. " Go to Bath," said you, " if

you have a return of your complaint." To Bath I came, et me voiçi rétablie! But I do not at all like this foolish frivolous place, and shall leave it as soon as the nymph of the spring permits.

Being here, naturally reminds me to speak of Mrs. Macauley. I feel myself extremely scandalized at her conduct, and yet I did not esteem her; I knew her to be absurd, vain, and affected, but never could have suspected her of the indecent, and I am sorry to say, profligate turn which her late actions and letters have betrayed. The men do so rejoice and so exult, that it is really provoking; yet have they no real cause for triumph; for this woman is far from being any criterion by which to judge of the whole sex; she was not feminine either in her writings or her manners; she was only a tolerably clever man! Did I ever tell you, my dear Madam, an answer her daughter once made to me? Desirous, from civility, to take some notice of her, and finding she was reading Shakspeare, I asked her if she was not delighted with many parts of King John? "I never read the *kings*, ma'am," was the truly characteristic reply.

I have got Lowth's Isaiah. It appears to me to be a work of great labour and erudition; but better calculated for scholars than plain Christians, as the notes are rather critical than devotional. The Bishop, however, is an admirable writer. His book, *De Sacra Poesi*, is a treasure, and has taught me to consider the Divine Book it illustrates under many new and striking points of view; it makes

one appreciate the distinct and characteristic excellence of the sacred poets and historians, in a manner wonderfully entertaining and instructive.

My very agreeable friend, Mrs. Kennicott, has strongly recommended to me a thing just published by Dr. Glasse, from the French. It is called, "A Lady of Quality's advice to her Children," etc. The author seems to have known perfectly the human heart, and to have despised the world, from a full conviction of its nothingness, upon a thorough acquaintance with it.

I have just been running over the posthumous Letters of Shenstone and his correspondents, and I think them the worst collection that ever was published with real names. Yet do not you, my dear Madam, find something touching in a *real* correspondence, however indifferently executed? To see a commerce of affection carried on between a set of persons from their youth, when all is gay and smiling; then to have the same people arriving at the next period, when they are the slaves of cares, of vexation, and of disappointment; and then to watch them fall one by one, through the broken arches of the bridge of life, till perhaps but one is left of the social set; and surely in this case, "*'Tis the survivor dies*"—last of all, he himself falls, and you are told in a note, perhaps, that "this ingenious gentleman, just as he attained some important point which had been the object of his ambition, or reached the summit of his wishes by the possession of an ample fortune—*died*." Whether

this will have the honour to kiss your hands in town, or whether you were tempted to Badminton by your beloved Duchess, I know not; but this I know, that I am with perfect respect, dearest Madam,

Ever yours,

H. More.

H. More to her Sister Martha

London, *March* 7, 1783.

I was yesterday at Mrs. Ord's, to start upon my career of friendship with Mr. Smelt. I inclose part of his letter to her, in which you will see that I have the honour to be in favour with this very exalted character. You know he was preceptor to the Prince of Wales, under the direction of the Earl of Holderness, and as he would receive no settled appointment, he is distinguished by the high appellation of the king's friend. We had a pleasant interesting evening. I have known him for some years: he is an old acquaintance, but a new friend. Her party was small, as it was made on purpose to bring us together. I had Sir Joshua, Cambridge, and Mr. Smelt, all to myself; not badly off, you will say. On Friday evening, I was at a very fine party at Lady Rothes, where I found a great many of my friends—Mrs. Montagu, Boscawen, Carter, Thrale, Burney, and Lady Dartrey; in short, it was remarked that there was not a woman in London, who has been distinguished

for taste and literature, that was absent. The men were modest, and said they were abashed, the other sex made so strong a party.

I refused to go to-night with Lady Middleton and Mrs. Porteus, to hear Tessier read: for even if I had the least appetite for anything of that sort, I should certainly prefer being drawn into the stream, and going to see Mrs. Siddons, which I have also refused to do, though Lady Spencer took the pains to come yesterday to ask me to go with her. You know I have long withdrawn myself from the theatre. Lady Bathurst came by appointment, and made a very long and kind visit; she was quite happy, in hourly expectation of Lord Apsley, after a two years' absence in Germany and France. We dined the other day at Mrs. Montagu's. Out of sixteen persons, there were not three English men or women. De Luc, the Swiss metaphysician and geologist, a man of great merit, and Madame la Fite, were all the foreigners I knew; but my good stars placed Mr. Locke on one side of me; which was some consolation for having a prate-apace jackanapes of a Frenchman (a *bel esprit* though) on the other. Mr. Locke never speaks but to instruct, in matters of taste, especially in the fine arts. In the evening we had a very strong reinforcement of blues. Mrs. Montagu inquires after you all.

LONDON, 1783.

Did you hear of a woman of quality, an earl's daughter, perishing for want the other day, near

Cavendish Square. The sad story is, that she had married an attorney, a bad man, and had several children; they all frequently experienced the want of a morsel of bread. Lady Jane grew extremely ill, and faint with hunger. An old nurse, who had never forsaken her mistress in her misfortunes, procured by some means a sixpence; Lady Jane sent her out to buy a cow-heel; the nurse brought it in, and carried a piece of it to her mistress: "No," said she, "I feel myself dying—all relief is too late; and it would be cruel in me to rob the children of a morsel, by wasting it on one who must die"—so saying, she expired. I leave you to make your own comments on this domestic tragedy, in a metropolis drowned in luxury. What will Sally say to side-dishes and third courses now?

Yesterday we dined at the Bishop of Salisbury's. Dr. Heberden, Dr. and Mrs. Kennicott, Mythology Bryant, and Mrs. Carter. With Mr. Bryant I always have some delightful conversation; he is not only a very able, but a pious man, and has devoted his Pagan learning to truly Christian purposes. I spent the afternoon on Tuesday with Mrs. Delany and the Duchess of Portland. I think that charming Duchess very much broken in her looks; and she is not likely to be cured by her son's being appointed premier to this distracted country. His ministry, I suppose, will be still shorter than his vice-royalty was. These labours and vicissitudes are the blessings of greatness. Even riches do not make rich. I should be glad to

know what our friend Dr. Stonehouse would think of such new-fashioned doctrines as I have lately heard in a Charity Sermon on a Sunday, from a dignified ecclesiastic, and a popular one too, but I will not tell his name; he told the rich and great, that they ought to be extremely liberal in their charities, because they were happily *exempted* from the *severer virtues*. How do you like such a sentiment from a Christian teacher? What do you think Polycarp or Ignatius would say to it?

H. More to her Sister Martha

LONDON, *May*, 1783.

I dined one day last week in Dudley Street,[1] to celebrate the Viscount's [2] birth-day, who completed his twenty-fifth year. His mother told him she wanted to have him married, and advised him to fall in love; he said he should if he were with any young ladies in the country; but that he never could in London, for the women did not stand still long enough for a man to fall in love with them. The other day I divided between Lady Bathurst and Lady Charlotte Wentworth. The latter gave me a little packet she had just received from Madame le Cat, directed for me; it contained a pretty French snuff-box, on which is the tomb of Rousseau, in the isle of Poplars. I was invited last week to six or eight dinners or assemblies, but did not go to any of them. I intended to have sent this away

[1] Mrs. Boscawen's. [2] Viscount Falmouth.

last night, but Mr. Cambridge came in at tea, and sat gossipping and being agreeable till twelve ; and I was so full of dactyls and spondees, that I quite forgot my letter. I was asked to meet the chemical and polemical Bishop Watson to-day at Mr. Cole's, but was engaged elsewhere.

The King and Queen have suffered infinitely from the loss of the sweet little prince, who was the darling of their hearts. I was charmed with an expression of the King's. " Many people (said he) would regret they ever *had* so *sweet* a child, since they were forced to part with him : that is not my case. I am thankful to God for having graciously allowed me to enjoy such a creature for four years." Yet his sorrow was very great.

LONDON, *May* 22, 1783.

I have finished my campaign in town ; we do not now appear to any body unless we meet them strolling in the streets. We dined one day last week at Mrs. Banister's, to meet the Bishop of Winchester and Mrs. North ; there was a great deal of other company, among whom was Mr. Swinburne the author of " Travels to Spain, Sicily," etc. One is always surprised to find the author of two or three great big burly quartos, a *little* genteel young man. He is modest and agreeable, not wise and heavy, like his books. The next morning I breakfasted with the Bishop of Chester and Mrs. Porteus, and we visited the tombs, and dwelt among the dust in Westminster Abbey. On Saturday, I

wound up my town adventures, by dining and passing the evening with Mrs. Boscawen and a little snug party, consisting of the above-said bishop, the Coles, and the Duchess of Beaufort. Since that time, I have been inexorable to all invitations, though two rival parties were strongly pressed upon me last night; one at Mr. Soame Jenyns's, and the other to meet the Barringtons at Bishop Porteus's. There was no way of getting off either, but by refusing both.

A visitor has just gone away quite chagrined that I am such a rigid Methodist that I cannot come to her assembly on Sunday, though she protests with great piety, that she *never has cards*, and that it is quite savage in me to think there can be any harm in a little agreeable music.

H. More to her Sister

HAMPTON, 1783.

As I do not go to Ranelagh, nor the play, nor the opera, nor sup at Charles Fox's, nor play at Brookes's, nor bet at Newmarket, I have not seen that worthy branch of the house of Bourbon, the Duke de Chartres. I never heard of such a low, vulgar, vicious fellow. His character is—

Poltron sur mer,
Escroc sur terre,
Et vaut rien partout.

I have read Colman's "Ars Poetica": he is much too negligent a versifier, but easy and elegant.

I believe I forgot to mention Mrs. Vesey's pleasant Tuesday parties to you. It is a select society, which meets at her house every other Tuesday, and of which I am invited to be an unworthy member. It assembles on the day on which the Turk's Head Club dine together. In the evening they all meet at Mrs. Vesey's, with the addition of such other company as it is difficult to find elsewhere. Last Tuesday we met; and Mr. Langton and Mr. Walpole were added to the society, for the first time this winter. I rejoiced to find them again, for they are two of the very pleasantest men "that e'er my conversation coped withal." The latter told me a hundred pleasant stories of his father and the *then* court.

Alas! when will the distractions of this land be healed! Nothing but a national judgment can bring us to our senses. Surely the miseries which have visited the devoted Calabrians might open our eyes, and show us all that our evils are either imaginary, or of our own bringing on. War, gambling, and luxury, are none of them inflictions from heaven.

An arrangement of the ministry seems to be as far off as ever, and I am tired of writing, hearing, and undesigningly circulating untruths on this undecided subject. The news that was true at the beginning of one's page, proves false before one has reached the bottom, and one can hardly catch, ere it falls, the arrangement of the minute.

I wish you could see Hampton at this moment;

I think there never was greater perfection of beauty; so clean, so green, so flowery, so bowery! We dined the other day at Strawberry Hill, and passed as delightful a day, as elegant literature, high breeding, and lively wit can afford. As I was the greatest stranger, Mr. Walpole devoted himself to my amusement with great politeness, but I have so little of virtû and antiquarianism about me that I really felt myself quite unworthy of all the trouble he took for me.

H. More to her Sister

ADELPHI, *March* 8, 1784.

I have been in town some days, but had not time to write before, because, as the Duchess of Gordon told the Queen, "'tis nothing but fruz, fruz, all day, and rap, rap, all *neet*." Being here alone, I have dined out almost every day. This total change of scene, from the quiet, reading, contemplative life I have been so much used to, gave me headaches at first; but now that I am a little seasoned to the hot rooms, I am very well again. One of my engagements was to the Bishop of Chester's. It was a very pleasant party.

Mr. and Mrs. Soame Jenyns, gay, gallant, and young as ever, are really delectable to behold; so fond of each other, and so free from characteristic infirmities. I do not know such another pair. I think they make up between them about 165 years. There is this peculiarity in Mr. Jenyns's character,

that though he has the worst opinion of human nature, he has the greatest kindness for the individuals who compose it; and such a conformity in his temper to everything and everybody in common things, that he seems equally pleased in societies the most opposite. Whatever scepticism he might once have been charged with, I believe him now to be a real believer. The doubts entertained by some persons of his sincerity, appear from his late work on the internal evidence of Christianity to be quite unfounded. I think him very sincere, but not having been long acquainted with the doctrines of revelation, the novelty of them has excited his love of paradox. The book is very ingenious: perhaps he brings rather too much ingenuity into his religion. I know, however, an instance in which this little work has converted a philosophical infidel, who had previously read all that had been written on the subject, without effect.

We dined on Thursday at the Bishop of Salisbury's. I was a little sad at first, to think of the old party's being so broken up. We had only the Bishop of Chester and Mr. Bryant who had belonged to it. There was other company, and too fine a dinner.

Only think of this being Friday, and no Lælius [1] mentioned. We did not meet till the other day at dinner, at Mrs. Montagu's, and then there were such wonderments and astonishments and lamentations, that we had not met since last year. We

[1] Mr. Pepys.

were fifteen in company. Mr. Langton was one. I am sure you will honour him, when I tell you he is come on purpose to stay with Dr. Johnson, and that during his illness. He has taken a little lodging in Fleet Street, in order to be near, to devote himself to him. He has as much goodness as learning, and that is saying a bold thing of one of the first Greek scholars we have.

Mr. Locke has just sent me a curiosity, the first number of the London Chronicle, written by Johnson, an excellent paper, and very characteristic of the author. Mrs. Carter breakfasted with me on Monday. I saw the Lady Windsors the other night at a great assembly at Lady Rothes, which was so hot, so crowded, and so fine, that I never passed a more dull unpleasant evening. I am absolutely resolved I will go to such parties no more. How I grudged the waste of time, to pass an evening squeezed to death among a parcel of fine idle people, many of whom care as little for me, as I do for them ; and where it was impossible to have any thing worthy of being called conversation. It was not only vanity but vexation of spirit ; but one is drawn in by assurances of " a very small party."

H. More to her Sister

ADELPHI, 1784.

I have been falsely assuring everybody that there was no contest, but that the old members stood for Bristol. And yet we were such fools as to read

history, and believe it too, when we can't come at the truth of what is passing in our own town. A propos of elections—I had like to have got into a fine scrape the other night. I was going to pass the evening at Mrs. Cole's, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. I went in a chair, and they carried me through Covent Garden. A number of people, as I went along, desired the men not to go through the Garden, as there were a hundred armed men, who, suspecting every chairman belonged to Brookes's, would fall upon us. In spite of my entreaties, the men would have persisted; but a stranger, out of humanity, made them set me down, and the shrieks of the wounded, for there was a terrible battle, intimidated the chairmen, who at last were prevailed upon to carry me another way. A vast number of people followed me, crying out, "It is Mrs. Fox; none but Mr. Fox's wife would dare to come into Covent Garden in a chair: she is going to canvass in the dark." Though not a little frightened, I laughed heartily at this, but shall stir no more in a chair for some time. Mrs. Garrick is so interested for Pitt, that we send the man every day to wait the close of the poll, and to bring us the numbers. I do not believe she could eat her dinner without knowing how matters go. I, too, try to be interested, and sometimes do really act solicitude very well; but unluckily for my principles, I met Fox canvassing the other day, and he looked so sensible and agreeable, that if I had not turned my eyes another way,

I believe it would have been all over with me.

I have got a new admirer, and we flirt together prodigiously ; it is the famous General Oglethorpe, perhaps the most remarkable man of his time. He was foster-brother to the Pretender, and is much above ninety years old ; the finest figure you ever saw. He perfectly realizes all my ideas of Nestor. His literature is great, his knowledge of the world extensive, and his faculties as bright as ever ; he is one of the three persons still living who were mentioned by Pope ; Lord Mansfield and Lord Marchmont are the other two. He was the intimate friend of Southern, the tragic poet, and of all the wits of that time. He is perhaps the oldest man of a *gentleman* living. I went to see him the other day, and he would have entertained me by repeating passages from Sir Eldred. He is quite a preux chevalier, heroic, romantic, and full of the old gallantry. On Monday I dined at Lady Middleton's, and in the evening went to Mrs. Ord's, where there was everything delectable in the blue way. Mr. Walpole and I fought over the old ground, Pope against Dryden, and Mrs. Montagu backed him, but I would not give up.

I wish Sally had been in my place to-night ; she would have enjoyed it, and I could have spared it. I have just returned from Mrs. Montagu's, where I sat close by Lord Rodney, crowned with laurel and glory. Mrs. Pepys proposed that all the women in the room should go up and salute him, and

wanted me to begin; I professed that I would willingly be the second, but who would be the first? Nobody choosing to undertake it, so fine a project fell to the ground. He looks more like a delicate feeble man of quality than a hero.

April, 1784.

Did I tell you what a pleasant breakfast I had at Miss Hamilton's, where I met Lord Stormont by appointment? He was vastly agreeable. But as we had Mr. de Luc, and Sir William Hamilton, we had a little too much of virtû, and Calabria, and Vesuvius, all which was more interesting to them, than to his lordship and me. Miss Hamilton told us a pleasant anecdote of Hutton, the Moravian, who has the honour of being occasionally admitted to the royal breakfast-table. "Hutton," said the King to him one morning, "is it true that you Moravians marry without any previous knowledge of each other?" "Yes, may it please your majesty," returned Hutton, "our marriages are *quite royal*." We had at dinner on Saturday, the Abbé Grant from Rome, Sir William Hamilton, Sir Joshua, Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Vesey, Mrs. Carter, Miss Hamilton, and young Montagu, an amiable and agreeable young man. I think his excellent aunt judges very rightly in not sending him abroad for a year or two: he will learn as much from her conversation, and see as much good company in her house, as he could do in any foreign city in the world; and with greater safety to his morals. But to return to the company: in the evening we had

Mrs. Walsingham, the Jenynses, the Pepyses, the Shipleys, Lady Rothes, Mrs. Ord, the Burneys, Mr. Walpole—in short I think we had above thirty, all as agreeable people as one would wish to see; and yet, being as it were at home, I was obliged to divide myself, to avoid the censure of addicting myself to favourites, so that I could not pick up much amusement, and indeed Mr. Walpole told me he never saw me so disagreeable; he wished I would be rude and entertaining; so I promised him I would the next time.

I am just returned from a very great dinner at Mrs. Montagu's; but the naughty king robbed us again of Mr. Smelt. Colman dined with us, and inquired about you all. I cannot spare time to write another word, as I am very busy copying the Bas Bleu for the king, who desires to have it. Yesterday Dr. Heberden made me a very long and kind visit, and said civil things about the Bas Bleu. He seems eager to have it printed, and tried to combat all my reasons, which I told him were too good to give up. I had a very kind note from Johnson about a week since; it was written in good spirits; and as it was a volunteer, and not an answer, it looks as if he were really better. He tells me he longs to see me, to praise the Bas Bleu as much as envy can praise;—there 's for you!

ADELPHI, 1784.

Did I tell you I went to see Dr. Johnson? Miss Moncton carried me, and we paid him a very long

visit. He received me with the greatest kindness and affection, and as to the Bas Bleu, all the flattery I ever received from every body together would not make up the sum. He said—but I seriously insist you do not tell any body, for I am ashamed of writing it even to you ;—" there was no name in poetry that might not be glad to own it." You cannot imagine how I stared : all this from Johnson, that parsimonious praiser ! I told him I was delighted at his approbation ; he answered quite characteristically, " And so you may, for I give you the opinion of a man who does not rate his judgment in these things very low, I can tell you."

We had a good party at the Bishop of St. Asaph's a few nights ago. Among the chief talkers was Mr. Erskine ; he has amazing abilities, but to me he is rather brilliant than pleasant. His animation is vehemence ; and he contrives to make the conversation fall too much on himself—a sure way not to be agreeable in mixed conversation. It is not natural that I should much commend his taste in letters, because he and I disagreed on the few subjects we started. I confess, however, that that is no proof of his being in the wrong. The bar seems to be a fitter theatre for his talents than the drawing-room, where good breeding is still more necessary than wit. On Saturday night Mrs. Garrick and I drank tea with Lælius and his lady, only a *partie quarrée*, so quiet and comfortable ! He read select passages from the poets, and we commented, and criticized, and were chatty and

foolish. We had been two months trying to get that quiet evening.

I have told Mrs. Vesey all the fine things you say of your pathetic Recorder. She agrees with me in thinking him very bright, though a little coarse.

H. More to Mr. Pepys

BRISTOL, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

There has scarcely one bright September sun darted through my window upon my écritoire, but I have resolved to thank you for your very entertaining letter, which I received one day at dinner at Sandleford, and which furnished a very pleasing desert to the whole party; for to show you what *entire* confidence you may place in me, I obeyed your injunction of *not* betraying your treasonable sentiments, by putting your letter into Mrs. Montagu's hand, who forthwith read it aloud: this produced a great deal of pleasantry, and renewed the old critical squabbles again. We had not forces for a regular battle, but many a skirmish did we fight; in these I was sure to be worsted by the disciplined veteran, who alas! has *arms as well as rules*.

I need not tell you that my visit was an exceedingly pleasant one: we passed our time in the full enjoyment of the best blessings *this* world has to bestow—friendship, tranquillity, and literature. You agree with me, I know, in thinking that what

makes our accomplished friend so delightful in society, is, that in her company *les jeux et les ris* constantly act as pages and maids of honour to Apollo and the nine, who always owe half their attractions to their lovely train ; and who, though very *respectable* without them, can never without them be entirely *captivating*. So well were we pleased with the manner in which we lived together, that we have been actually in treaty for repairing to Sandleford to *encore* my visit, but we cannot accommodate our time to each other, so I shall stay till Mrs. M. comes to Bath.

I have lived a most gloriously idle life, all the last months, rambling about the romantic hills and delicious vallies of Somersetshire : which is full of enchanting scenery. The views are rather interesting than magnificent ; and the neighbourhood of the friend's house where I was, abounds with the most smiling vallies, the most touching little home views, the prettiest rising and falling grounds, the clearest living streams, and the most lovely hanging woods I ever saw. These gentle scenes, which are *agrestes* without being savage, are, I am persuaded, more delightful to *live* amongst, than the blaze and the roar, the awful and astonishing, of the sublime : of this *I* am convinced, by a ride we took through the lofty cliffs of Cheddar, so stupendously romantic that the shade of Ossian or the ghost of Taliessen himself might range, not undelighted, through them : my imagination was delighted, was confounded, was oppressed, and darted a thousand

years back into the days of chivalry and enchantment, at seeing hang over my head, vast ledges of rock exactly resembling mouldered castles and ruined abbeys. I had a delightful confusion of broken images in my head, without one distinct idea; but the delight was of so serious a nature that I could scarcely refrain from crying, especially when we sat down upon a fragment of rock, and heard one of Gray's odes finely set, and sung with infinite feeling. I would have given the world to have heard my favourite Ode to Melancholy by Beaumont and Fletcher; you know it:

> An eye that 's fastened to the ground,
> A tongue chained up without a sound;
> Gloomy cells, and twilight groves,
> Places which pale Passion loves, etc. etc.

But these pensive pleasures should be repeated at long intervals; they wind up the mind too high, and infuse into the spirit a sentiment compounded of sadness and delight, which, though it may qualify one to write odes, yet indisposes one for a much more indispensable thing, the enjoyment of the intercourse of ordinary society. But you will grow sick of these sombre scenes, though I think you would have performed the pilgrimage itself with enthusiasm.

Present my kind compliments to Mrs. Pepys: I know not where you are, but I suppose on Mount Ephraim.

I am your obliged, etc.

H. More.

H. More to her Sister

ADELPHI, 1784.

You ask after Lælius. He is such a favourite with great and learned ladies, that he is generally fastened down by one or other of them, and though he does now and then make some struggles for his liberty, it cannot always be obtained. Whereas Horace, liking nonsense-talk better than to be always with the Greeks and Romans, I sometimes get more than my share of him, as was the case at a most complete *bas bleu* the other night at Mrs. Vesey's, where was every thing witty and every thing learned that is to be had; but I generally stick by my old friends; so got into a nook between Mr. Walpole and Mr. Jenyns and was contented. I am very humble, you will say. The next night I was in a different scene, a most splendid assembly at the Bishop of St. Asaph's. The Prince of Wales was there. He was reckoned to come excessively early—half-past ten; you will judge what a time it was before we got away, though it was only a *private* party of about two hundred, and I believe the Bishop was heartily glad when he got rid of us. For my part, I do not desire to be ever again in such a crowd, whether of the great vulgar or the small!

Saturday I had a most pleasant afternoon with Mrs. Delany and the Duchess of Portland, who now begin to get up their spirits, which have been greatly depressed by the loss of Lady Mansfield. There had been a friendship of sixty years' stand-

ing between them. On Tuesday we dined with a man-party : a very pleasant lord, and a very merry judge, though that is against the proverb. And, on Friday, we had a small but a very rational party at Mrs. Burrows's.

H. More to one of her Family

HAMPTON, *December*, 1784.

Poor dear Johnson ! he is past all hope. The dropsy has brought him to the point of death ; his legs have been scarified : but nothing will do. I have, however, the comfort to hear that his dread of dying is in a great measure subdued ; and now he says " the bitterness of death is past." He sent the other day for Sir Joshua ; and after much serious conversation told him he had three favours to beg of him, and he hoped he would not refuse a dying friend, be they what they would. Sir Joshua promised. The first was, that he would never paint on a Sunday ; the second, that he would forgive him thirty pounds which he had lent him, as he wanted to leave them to a distressed family ; the third was, that he would read the Bible whenever he had an opportunity ; and that he would never omit it on a Sunday. There was no difficulty but upon the *first* point ; but at length, Sir Joshua promised to gratify him in all. How delighted should I be to hear the dying discourse of this great and good man, especially now that faith has subdued his fears. I wish I could see him.

H. More to her Sister

ADELPHI, 1785.

Boswell tells me he is printing *anecdotes* of Johnson; not his *life*, but, as he has the vanity to call it, his *pyramid*. I besought his tenderness for our virtuous and most revered departed friend, and begged he would mitigate some of his asperities. He said, roughly, "He would not cut off his claws, nor make a tiger a cat to please anybody." It will, I doubt not, be a very amusing book; but I hope not an indiscreet one: he has great enthusiasm, and some fire. The Bishop of Gloucester (Dr. Halifax) did me the honour of calling upon me. I have since been there of an evening, and we are become great friends: they seem amiable people.

I have had a great deal of conversation with Mr. Anstey. I found him obliging and polite, but he is one of those poets who are better to read than to see. I think him a real genius in the way of wit and humour; but he appears to be of a shy and silent cast, and to prefer the quiet solemnity of a whist table to talking parties. On Wednesday we had a great dinner at home, for the first time this year, Mrs. Garrick disliking company more and more. The party consisted of the Smelts, the Montagus, the Boyles, the Walsinghams, Mrs. Carter, Mr. Walpole, and Miss Hamilton. Though I like them every one separately, yet it was impossible to enjoy them altogether. I never desire to

sit down with more than six, or eight at the outside, at dinner. I have had an affecting business on my hands. The wife of Dr. Adams, Master of Pembroke College, is dead, and his friends prevailed on him to set out for London, to be out of the way during the last sad ceremonies ; so he came to the hotel next to us, in order for me to devote myself to him as much as possible. Our first meeting was very affecting. I never saw anything so meek and so resigned. But it is a heavy blow at almost eighty !

We had a splendid dinner in Stratford Place,[1] indeed much too magnificent, and too many people for comfort ; all literati. Among them Sir Joshua, the two Wartons, and Tyrwhitt. Dr. Warton was, as usual, very enthusiastic and very agreeable. We staid till near twelve. Mrs. Montagu, in a whisper, engaged us to dine privately with her the next day ; so we staid on purpose, and had nobody but dear Mrs. Carter ; which I liked vastly. We spent the evening at Mrs. Vesey's last Thursday, with Mr. Walpole and Dowager Lady Townsend ; a woman who has *said* more good things than any living person, but who, I believe, has not done quite so many. Poor Mr. —— could not talk much ; but he seemed to enjoy the conversation. When I shook hands with him, I said to myself, " I shall never see you again " ; and so it is likely to prove ; for he has lain senseless ever since. Poor man ! he has not the dispositions suited to his advanced age,

[1] Mrs. Walsingham's.

and his near prospect of death. Soame Jenyns, too, is in great trouble. We spent the evening agreeably together, and Mrs. Jenyns was taken that very night with a fever, and is dangerously ill. I tremble for an event which is to destroy an union of such perfect harmony, and put an end to an attachment which continues to be a passion very long after fourscore.

Sir Charles and Lady Middleton dined here last Tuesday, and in the evening we had a magnificent *bas bleu*, at which I think assisted almost every creature that adorns that fraternity. We had much pleasant and some profitable discussion.

From the same to the same

GLANVILLA,[1] *June* 16, 1785.

We left Teston on Monday. Poor LadyMiddleton still in bed with a fever! the only drawback from a visit which was otherwise so delightful. It is a charming mansion. We spent the evening with Miss Hamilton; who, I fancy, will have another name by the time you get this letter. I was much amused with hearing old Leonidas Glover sing his own fine ballad of "Hosier's Ghost," which was very affecting. He is past eighty.

Mr. Walpole coming in just afterwards, I told him how highly I had been pleased. He begged me to entreat a repetition of it. I suppose you recollect that it was the satire, conveyed in this

[1] Mrs. Boscawen's seat.

little ballad, upon the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole's ministry, which is thought to have been a remote cause of his resignation. It was a very curious circumstance to see his son listening to the recital of it with so much complacency. Such is the effect of the lapse of time.

I have rarely heard a more curious instance of the absence of mind produced by poetic enthusiasm, than that which occurred when the author of Leonidas made one of a party of literati assembled at the house of Mr. Gilbert West, at Wickham. Lord Lyttleton, on opening his window one morning, perceived Glover pacing to and fro with a whip in his hand, by the side of a fine bed of tulips just ready to blow, and which were the peculiar care of the lady of the mansion, who worshipped Flora with as much ardour as Glover did the muses. His mind was at the instant teeming with the birth of some little ballad, when Lord Lyttleton, to his astonishment and dismay, perceived him applying his whip with great vehemence to the stalks of the unfortunate tulips ; all of which, before there was time to awaken him from his reverie, he had completely levelled with the ground ; and when the devastation he had committed was afterwards pointed out to him, he was so perfectly unconscious of the proceeding, that he could with difficulty be made to believe it.

I spent a couple of evenings, the last week I was in town, with only Mr. Walpole and Miss Hamilton. The former read some productions of his own to

us. He is gone down to Strawberry-Hill, where is his printing press, to collect all his works ; which, when bound, are to be sent after me to Bristol, to help towards making a library at " Cowslip Green." He likes the name, and says it is a relation, a cousin at least, to " Strawberry-Hill." He likes the plan and drawing mightily ; and so does Mr. Smelt, with whom I spent a pleasant evening, a day or two before I set out. The cottage has travelled about to them all in turn, so that they all know every creek and corner of the little mansion.

H. More to her Sister

LONDON, *Feb.* 17, 1786.

I really have not found a moment's time to write since I came here, one is so hurried and bustled about ; and has so many nothings to do, which yet must be done, and so many foolish notes to write, which yet must be written. I had, however, yesterday a comfortable solitary Sunday. I am here alone. I have not yet seen a great many of my friends. 'Tis true I have dined out nearly every day with some kind people, who have fetched me and brought me home, but I have not gone to evening parties. I want a little time to break myself in, so as to take to it kindly. I made poor Vesey go with me, on Saturday, to see Mr. Walpole, who has had a long illness. Notwithstanding his sufferings, I never found him so pleasant, so witty, and so entertaining. He said a thousand diverting

things about Florio,[1] but accused me of having imposed on the world by a dedication full of falsehood, meaning the compliment to himself. I never knew a man suffer pain with such entire patience. This submission is certainly a most valuable part of religion, and yet, alas! he is not religious. I must, however, do him the justice to say, that except the delight he has in teazing me for what he calls over-strictness, I have never heard a sentence from him which savoured of infidelity.

I was at a small party the other night, of which Mr. Burke was one. He appeared to be very low in health and spirits. He talked to me with a kindness which revived my old affection for him. We had several other opposition wits that evening; among others, Lord North, who was delightfully entertaining, and told some excellent stories, at which he has a very good talent; possessing in perfection the art of grave humour. Mrs. Fielding and I, like pretty little Misses, diverted ourselves with teaching Sir Joshua and Lord Palmerston the play of twenty questions, and thoroughly did we puzzle them by picking out little obscure insignificant things which we collected from ancient history. Lord North overhearing us, desired to be initiated into this mysterious game, and it was proposed that I should question him: I did so, but his twenty questions were exhausted before he came near the truth. As he at length gave up the

[1] This poetical tale had been lately published with the Bas Bleu.

point, I told him my thought was the earthen lamp of Epictetus. "I am quite provoked at my own stupidity," said his lordship, "for I quoted that very lamp last night in the House of Commons."

I was the other day at Lady Mount Edgecombe's who repeated her invitation for the Mount Edgecombe visit next summer with the most earnest politeness. I gave her to understand that I was afraid it must be left for another year; the truth is, I intend to get off all summer invitations, that I may have the more time for Cowslip Green, which place, I hope, will favour my escape from the world gradually.

I dined the other day with Mrs. Walsingham, and went in the evening to Lady Middleton's to meet Lord and Lady Dartmouth. He is the nobleman, who, you know, Cowper says—"wears a coronet and prays." The Attorney-General and Lady Louisa Macdonald wait to convey me to Sir Robert Herries', where we dine together. And now I hope to receive due praise for my implicit obedience in gratifying your insatiable curiosity with an account of almost every dinner I have eaten, and every person to whom I have spoken.

H. More to her Sister

London, *April*, 1786.

I invite myself to dine with poor Mrs. Vesey (whose spirits are still terribly depressed) whenever I have a vacant day. She is only cheerful when

she has one or two friends about her, and there are a little set who generally go to her in turn every day. Yesterday Mrs. Carter and I met there, and I had made an assignation with Mr. Walpole in the evening; we had likewise Mr. Burke. The vivacity of this wonderfully great man is much diminished; business and politics have impaired his agreeableness; but neither years nor sufferings can abate the entertaining powers of the pleasant Horace, which rather improve than decay; though he himself says he is only fit to be a milk-woman; as the chalk-stones at his fingers' ends qualify him for nothing but *scoring*; but he declares he will not be a *Bristol milk-woman*. I was obliged to recount to him all that odious tale.

I was the other day at a most agreeable party at Lady Galway's. Mrs. Fielding, Mrs. Carter, Lord North, Lord Macartney and myself, were in one little set; and they were very entertaining. Lord Macartney is one of the most agreeable men I know, of polished mind and fine taste; besides the rare merit which he possesses, of having brought clean hands and a pure fame from India. To meet these gentlemen in assemblies, and in crowds, where the most stupid and illiterate make just as good a figure, is not seeing them at all; but it is pleasant to come at them in these select societies, which we are to have often of a Saturday, it being the only day the Houses do not sit.

Mrs. Piozzi's book is much in fashion. It is indeed entertaining; but there are two or three

passages exceedingly unkind to Garrick, which filled me with indignation. If Johnson had been envious enough to utter them, she might have been prudent enough to suppress them. Johnson with all his genius had no taste for Garrick's acting; and with all his virtues, was envious of his riches: this led him very unjustly to say severe things, which Garrick not unfrequently retorted; but why must these things be recorded? The speaker, perhaps, had forgotten them, or was sorry for them, or did not mean them; but this new-fashioned biography seems to value itself upon perpetuating every thing that is injurious and detracting.

I perfectly recollect the candid answer Garrick once made to my inquiry why Johnson was so often harsh and unkind in his speeches, both to and of him; Why, *Nine*, he replied, it is very natural; is it not to be expected he should be angry, that I who have so much less merit than he, should have had so much greater success?

The book, however, *in general*, places Johnson's character very high. I expressed myself with some warmth to Lælius against these passages, saying, however, that I was glad she had done justice to my *living* friends at least. *His* learning in particular is very highly commended.

H. More to her Sister

London, *April*, 1786.

The Bozzi, etc. subjects are not yet exhausted, though everybody seems heartily sick of them. Everybody, however, conspires not to let them drop. That, and the "Cagliostro," and the "Cardinal's Necklace," spoil all conversation, and destroyed a very good evening at Mr. Pepys's last night. The party was snug, and of my own bespeaking, consisting only of Mr. Walpole, Mrs. Montagu, the Burneys, and Cambridge.

I have had a very long and entertaining letter from Girard.[1] He gives such an account of the pedantry and précieuseté of the ladies of Paris as is quite ridiculous. There is a new Lyceum, under the inspection of Marmontel and the other sçavans: there he says, the *femmes de qualité*, *the petits maîtres*, *and the bourgeoiserie même en robe de chambre*, run to study philosophy, and neglect their families to be present at lectures of anatomy. I hope we shall never have any of these sort of institutions here, which would be only multiplying public places, and add to dissipation instead of increasing knowledge.

It was my lot the other day at dinner to sit between two travellers, famous for making geography their whole subject: the one is as fond of talking of the east as the other is of the north; the

[1] One of the French Academicians, with whom she corresponded some years.

former poured the Ganges into one of my ears, and the latter the Danube into the other, and the confluence of these two mighty rivers deluged all my ideas, till I did not know what they were talking about, especially as I like *things*, much better than *words*.

I am this day in the full enjoyment of a most complete holiday—Mrs. Garrick is gone to Hampton. I have refused all invitations, and have ordered that nobody should be let in, that I may have the luxury of one quiet uninterrupted day. I awoke with great delight in the very anticipation of it.

The Bishop of Chester brought me home from Soame Jenyns's the other night. We had there almost all I know that is wise, learned and witty; but there were too many, and we all complained of a superfluity of good things. Cambridge said we should have made eight of the best parties in London. He gave us a specimen of Johnson's manner. "Poetry, Madam, is like brown bread; those who make it at home, never approve of what they meet with elsewhere."

I was asked lately to a great assembly, where I should have met all the *corps diplomatique*, but it was not worth while to lose an evening and get the headache, only to see a few ambassadors and envoys make low bows, drink orangeade, and play at whist. I have kept my resolution to avoid these great crowds, except when I have been snared into an assembly under the alluring name of a little private

party, into which trap I have fallen several times.

I spent quite a rational sober country day on Thursday, with the wise and virtuous Langton and Lady Rothes; so peaceful, I could not persuade myself I was in London; dined at three; sat and worked while he read to us, or talked of books, till late at night. I really begin to hope we are reforming; for on Saturday I got another such sober day at Mrs. Montagu's, with only the Smelts; and we all agreed we had not been more comfortable for a long time; and yet people have rarely the sense or courage to do these things, but still must meet in flocks and herds.

H. More to Mrs. Boscawen

HAMPTON, 1786.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Some little contretems has detained us here a fortnight beyond our bargain; we propose, however, certainly to be in town by the beginning of next week. I have been amusing myself, during a part of our solitude, with reading some of Madame de Sevigné's letters, and you cannot imagine, my dear Madam, what a fund of entertainment I find as I go along in drawing a parallel between them and those of a certain lady, whom it is one of my greatest honours to be permitted to call my friend. The same admirable turn of expression, the same ease which, when imitated, is so stiff, and, when

natural, is so full of grace. The same philanthropy, the same warm feelings, and, above all, the same excess of maternal tenderness—the same art of dignifying subjects, in themselves of little moment, but which become amiable and interesting by some *true*, though seemingly *random* and *careless* stroke, that shews the hand of a master, but of a master sketching for his amusement, and not finishing for the public. This rage for *finishing* may produce good essays and fine orations, but it makes frigid letters. For this reason, I think Voltaire's letters are in bad taste ; he always intends to be brilliant, and, therefore, is almost always affected—every passage seems written in its *very best* manner. Now to me the epistolary style is what it ought to be, when the writer, by a happy and becoming negligence, has the art of making you believe that he could write a great deal better if he would, but that he has too much judgment to use great exertions on small occasions—he will not draw Ulysses's bow to shoot at a pigeon. It is not, however, that I think letter-writing trifling because it is familiar, any more than I think an epigram easy because it is short. My two models, whom I *parallelized* (I believe there is no such word though) at the beginning of this scrawl, also resemble each other in one particular as much as they differ from the generality; which is their perspicuity ; their sense is never perplexed ; their periods are not so long as to be involved, nor so short as to be affected ; and there is in their manner a kind of luminous cast, which,

like the sunshine of Claude, embellishes the most trifling objects. When a poet happens to be possessed of this transparency of expression, this vivid brightness, it gives a wonderful charm to his numbers.

But to go from poetry to painting.—And so, my dear Madam, your partiality to your unworthy friend makes you determined to send her down to posterity by the only conveyance in which she can ever expect to reach it. I feel all the kindness of your intention, and I hope you will not think me ungrateful when I say that I have such a repugnance to having my picture taken, that I do not know any motive on earth which could induce me to it but your wishes, which to me, are such indisputable commands, that at any time on Wednesday you will please to appoint, I shall have the honour to attend you to Mr. Opie ; and as I am sure the dinner with you will be the pleasantest part of the business to me, I shall wait for your commands as to both. En attendant, believe me, dear Madam,

Ever yours,

H. M.

H. More to her Sister

LONDON, *March*, 1787.

The first day I went out I had an invitation to Lady Amherst, and another to *the Vesey*, to meet Mr. Smelt and Miss Burney. I deserted the peeress, and was rewarded for my democracy with a very pleasant and a *very little* party.

I have an Anti-gallican anecdote for you. Just before Sir Joseph Yorke came home from Holland, he was at dinner one day at the Prince of Orange's, where was the Duc de Chartres : this latter behaved with his usual unpoliteness, and took it into his head to ridicule the English ambassador. Finding that Sir Joseph did not laugh at any of his buffooneries, " Quoi, Monsieur," said he, " est-ce que vous ne riez jamais ? " " Rarement, Monseigneur," replied Sir Joseph with great coolness. Just at that time, the combined French and Spanish fleets were in the British channel—a new subject for the ill-breeding of the French prince. " Mais, Monsieur," says he again, turning to Sir Joseph, " si notre flotte attacqueroit l'Angleterre ? " " Alors, Monseigneur, je rirois," said Sir Joseph.

I have the pleasure to find Mr. Walpole remarkably well. Yesterday he sent me a very agreeable letter, with some very thick volumes of curious French memoirs, desiring me, if I liked them, to send for the other *twenty-three volumes*—a pretty light undertaking, in this mad town, and this short life. I have just been requested to promote a subscription for poor Maty's widow, who is left in great distress ; but what little I do I had rather do from my own purse, than by applications. I must not remember that he disliked me, and did me whatever little ill turn he could in his Review.

I have three or four invitations for every day ; but I can only manage one dinner in one day. I

passed an evening very pleasantly at the Bishop of Chester's, with an episcopal party, among others the new Bishop of Lincoln ; and since that I have visited Mrs. Pretyman, at their own house. Yesterday I dined with dear Mrs. Boscawen, and she carried me to drink tea at Mrs. Delany's, where was Lady Bute, and the old noble party, all except its once greatest ornament, the ever-to-be-regretted Duchess of Portland. We then went to Lady Charlotte Finch's, at St. James's, where we found a very agreeable and accomplished society of all the wise ladies of the age. I was at the Bishop of Salisbury's the other day, and am invited to Mrs. Montagu's to-night, and Mrs. Walsingham's to-morrow, but have declined both.

From the same to the same

LONDON, *March* 31, 1787.

Well, I have got the "Paston Letters." As letters, they have very little merit. The style of composition at that time was barbarous enough ; not a bit of the elegance of Rowley, the contemporary (if he ever existed) with the writers of these letters. To be sure they do throw a light on some obscure passages of history ; and as they contain the news of the day at a time when there were no newspapers, they often serve to correct history. It is curious enough to see the great Earl of Warwick, the setter-up and puller-down of kings, writing to entreat a friend to lend him ten pounds. Margaret

of Anjou appears better than the histories have made her.

I quite quarrel with Mrs. Ord, she does so extol Cowslip Green, that I am forced to lower it too much, to prevent all those who shall see it, after her commendations, from being disappointed. She gave Mr. Walpole so animated a description of it, that I believe he thinks it almost as fine as Strawberry Hill.

We had a very pleasant comical dinner the other day at Mrs. Cholmeley's. We were only nine females; every thing was very elegant; but we were as merry as if there had been no magnificence; and we all agreed, that men were by no means so necessary as we had all been foolish enough to fancy. On Friday I was at a great dinner at Mrs. Montagu's. It was too numerous to be very agreeable, and we got off in the evening. We had a snug dinner last week at Lady Lyttleton's—only General Conway, Lady Aylesbury, and the Spanish Ambassador, the Marquis del Campo, a giddy, merry mortal, with great animal spirits, and no very shining parts. He has none of the supercilious gravity of his country, and you would rather take him for a frothy Frenchman than a proud Castilian.

Tell Dr. Stonehouse I have seen Mrs. Gardiner. She is indeed a person of great excellence; her conversation is in heaven, whither she herself may be expected soon to go.

H. More to her Sister

LONDON, *April*, 1787.

We have been a whole week at Hampton, which I spent in strolling and reading. I enjoyed it prodigiously, and returned quite well; poor Mrs. Wilmot was with us, and made it very pleasant. She is so famous a reader of Shakspeare and Spenser, that we were quite poetical and pastoral. I spent a day at Lady Aylesbury's. In the evening there was a concert. It was quite *le temple des beaux-arts*. Lady A. works portraits as Raphael paints them; and there was Mrs. Damer, to remind us of her famous dogs of exquisite sculpture; and there was my Lord Derby, to talk about his company of Richmond House comedians—(you know Lady Aylesbury is the Duchess of Richmond's mother); Lord Abingdon, and his band of musicians; for it was he who gave us the concert, in which he was the principal performer; and there was General Conway, poet to the ducal theatre. It would have made some of the old nobility stare, to have seen so many great personages descended from them, degenerated (as their noble pride would have called it) into geniuses, actors, artists, and poets. *Real* talent, however, never degrades.

I am just returned from an exhibition of pictures, among others, the famous one of St. Ambrose expelling the Emperor Theodosius from the church, for which £2000 has been refused: I assure you it was not *I* that offered it.

I have had the fortitude to resist the most obliging invitations into Kent, from Mrs. Bouverie, the Bishop of Chester, and Lady Amherst; the latter I could only get off from, by promising to visit her another year, at her fine place at Montreal; so named from my Lord's conquest of that place, and where the sovereigns have been guests. But I could tell them that the attractions of my thatched cottage are more irresistible than all their splendour. I must except the Bishop's, indeed, whose sweet little parsonage at Hunton has none of the dulness of magnificence, but is small enough for ease and enjoyment, especially with such a master and mistress as it boasts.

H. More to Mr. Walpole

Cowslip Green, *June*, 1787.

Dear Sir,

It is no encouragement to be good, when it is so profitable to do evil: and I shall grow wicked upon principle, and ungrateful by system. If I thought that not answering one letter would always procure me two such, I would be as silent as ingratitude, bad taste, and an unfeeling heart, can cause the most undeserving to be. I did, indeed, receive your first obliging letter, and intended, in the true spirit of a Bristol trader, to have sent you some of my worthless beads, and bits of glass, in exchange for your ivory and gold dust, but a very tedious nervous headache has made me less than

ever qualified to traffic with you in this dishonest way, and I have been so little accustomed to connect your idea with that of pain and uneasiness, that I know not how to set about the strange association; but I am now better, and would not have named being sick at all, if there were any other apology in the world that would have justified my not writing. Mrs. Carter and I are agreed that your wit is by no means the cause of our esteem for you; because you cannot *help* having it if you would: and I never in my life could be attached to any one for their wit, if wit was the best thing they had. It is an established maxim with me, that the truest objects of warm attachment are the small parts of great characters. I never considered the patriot Brutus with any delight as the asserter of freedom, and as "refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate"; no, it is the gentle, compassionate Brutus that engages my affection, who refused to disturb the slumbers of the poor boy who attended him, in that anxious night when he destroyed himself, and so much needed his services. So when I sit in a little hermitage I have built in my garden, *not to be melancholy in*, but to think upon my friends, and to read their works, and their letters, Mr. Walpole seldomer presents himself to my mind as the man of wit, than as the tender-hearted and humane friend of my dear infirm, broken-spirited Mrs. Vesey. We admire talents, and admiration is a cold sentiment, with which affection has commonly nothing to do, but we more than admire

them when they are devoted to such gentle purposes. My very heart is softened when I consider that she is now out of the way of your kind attentions, and I fear that nothing else on earth gives her the smallest pleasure. But I shall make you sad, and myself too, if I write any longer in this strain, for I do love her with a tender affection, and cannot but take a warm interest in every thing that is either useful or pleasant to her. Even in this affecting decay of her sweet mind, her heart retains all its amiableness unimpaired. Her purity rather resembles that innocence, which is the ignorance of evil, than that virtue which is the conquest over it. But I am running on just as if you did not know and love her as well as I do! I hope she is gone to Tunbridge, which will amuse her a little, though it can do her no good.

I am become a perfect outlaw from all civil society and regular life. I spend almost my whole time in my little garden, "which mocks my scant manuring." From "morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve," I am employed in raising dejected pinks, and reforming disorderly honeysuckles.

Yours, dear Sir, very faithfully,

H. M.

H. More to her Sister

London, *May* 22, 1788.

I have been pleasantly engaged for a week past during this fine weather, in going almost every day to some pleasant villa of different friends. Tuesday

I dined at Strawberry Hill, a pleasant day, and a good little party. The next day we went to a sweet place which Mr. Montagu has bought on Shooter's Hill. Another day I went to Richmond with Mrs. Boscawen, and came home in the evening to a *Thé* at Mrs. Montagu's. Perhaps you do not know that a *Thé* is among the stupid new follies of the winter. You are to invite fifty or a hundred people to come at eight o'clock: there is to be a long table, or little parties at small ones; the cloth is to be laid, as at breakfast; every one has a napkin;—tea and coffee are made by the company, as at a public breakfast; the table is covered with rolls, wafers, bread and butter; and what constitutes the very essence of a *Thé*, an immense load of hot buttered rolls, and muffins, all admirably contrived to create a nauseau in persons fresh from the dinner table. Now, of all nations under the sun, as I take it, the English are the greatest fools:—because the Duke of Dorset in Paris, where people dine at two, thought this would be a pretty fashion to introduce; we, who dine at six, must adopt this French translation of an English fashion, and fall into it, as if it were an original invention: taking up our own custom at third hand. This will be a short folly.

Among my country excursions I must not omit dining with Mrs. Trimmer and her twelve children at Brentford—a scene, too, of instruction and delight. The other day I was at Mr. Langton's; our subject was Abolition; we fell to it with great

eagerness, and paid no attention to the wits who were round us, though there were two who were new to me—Mr. Malone, the critic of Shakspeare, and Dr. Gillies, author of the new history of Greece. I go to Mrs. Bouverie's, at Teston, for a fortnight, and then to Fulham Palace for another fortnight, and then to my own dear cottage.

H. More to Mr. Walpole

[London, 1789.]

That unprincely vagabond Queen Christina, said of the learned Vossius, "that he not only knew from whence words came, but whither they were going." The last half of this knowledge is all that is claimed by the writer of the enclosed jargon. It is an attempt, from the bon-ton gabble of the present age, to anticipate the general style of the next. This pert censor has not the presumption to quarrel with the naturalizing of foreign *words*, the discreet adoption of which adds opulence and ornament to our language; but (as she loves to sin in the very act of censure, and as the greatest rogue always turns king's evidence) she laments the peregrinity of *style*, the foreign fabrication of *sentences*, which is wearing away the beauty, diluting the spirit, and diminishing the force of our tongue. The courtly ease of the style of Addison, the sinewy force and clear precision of Swift, and the elegant vigour of a work well-known to, but not duly appreciated by Mr. Walpole, called the Castle

of Otranto, are untainted with this spreading corruption, and exhibit models of good taste in their several species of composition.

In the enclosed nonsense, though there is not one French *word*, there is not one English *idiom*. I confess I have been guilty of the most malicious exaggeration, but I was forced to allow for the increasing degeneracy of fifty years, in which period I suppose our style may have reached the acmé of defect, the perfection of abomination; for I am willing to hope that all the artillery of affectation and false taste continually battering it, will not be able, in less time, completely to demolish so noble a structure as the English language.

I feel so much ashamed of the nonsense I have written, that I dare not add a name which would disgrace my best title—that of Mr. Walpole's

most obedient, and much obliged,
humble servant.

P.S.—Taste is of all ages, and truth is eternal; and there is a truth in taste almost as demonstrable as any mathematical proposition.

A specimen of the English language, as it will probably be written and spoken in the next century; in a letter from a lady to her friend, in the reign of George the Fifth.

ALAMODE CASTLE, *June* 20, 1840.

DEAR MADAM,

I no sooner found myself here than I visited my new apartment, which is composed of five pieces;

the small room which gives upon the garden is practised through the great one, and there is no other issue. As I was quite exceeded with fatigue, I had no sooner made my toilette, than I let myself fall on a bed of repose, where sleep came to surprise me.

My lord and I are in the intention to make good cheer, and a great expense, and this country is in possession to furnish wherewithal to amuse oneself. All that England has of illustrious, all that youth has of amiable, or beauty of ravishing, sees itself in this quarter. Render yourself here then, my friend, and you shall find assembled all that there is of best, whether for letters, whether for birth.

Yesterday I did my possible to give to eat; the dinner was of the last perfection, and the wines left nothing to desire. The repast was seasoned with a thousand rejoicing sallies, full of salt and agreement, and one more brilliant than another. Lady Frances charmed me as for the first time; she is made to paint, has a great air, and has infinitely of expression in her physiognomy; her manners have as much of natural, as her figure has of interesting.

I had prayed Lady B. to be of this dinner, as I had heard nothing but good of her: but I am now disabused on her subject: she is past her first youth, has very little instruction, is inconsequent and subject to caution; but having evaded with one of her pretenders, her reputation has been committed by the bad faith of a friend, on whose fidelity she reposed herself; she is therefore fallen into

devotion, goes no more to spectacles, and play is defended at her house. Though she affects a mortal serious, I observed that her eyes were of intelligence with those of Sir James, near whom I had taken care to plant myself, though this is always a sacrifice which costs. Sir James is a great sayer of nothings ; it is a spoilt mind ; full of fatuity and pretension : his conversation is a tissue of impertinences, and the bad tone which reigns at present has put the last hand to his defects. He makes but little case of his word, but as he lends himself to whatever is proposed of amusing, the women all throw themselves at his head. Adieu.

H. More to her Sister

LONDON, *April*, 1790.

At Mrs. Montagu's the other day, I met Mr. Burke and a pleasant party ; indeed he is a sufficiently pleasant party of himself. There was also Mr. Mackenzie (the Man of Feeling), which determined me to go.

As to London, I shall be glad to get out of it ; the old little parties are not to be had in the usual style of comfort ; every thing is great, and vast, and late, and magnificent, and dull. I very seldom go to them, and always repent when I do. The old are all growing young, and seventy dresses like seventeen. Plenty of reading here, but not quite time for it. Five volumes of Bruce's Abyssinia on the table. You know he has been suspected, but

I believe without reason, to have hazarded a thousand extravagances in these travels.

I rejoice that our dear friend Dr. Horne will be the new bishop. I have not been so much vexed for a long time, as at Sir Charles Middleton's resignation of the comptrollership. They would not consent to help and forward his excellent plans of reform, in that important branch of the government, and an honest man does not feel happy in a situation where he sees a great deal of good to be done, which he is not allowed to do. I am going to dine with Mrs. Boscawen ; the Duchess is just come to town and presents her daughter. How I pity a sober woman who has a daughter to present to this dissipated world !

H. More to Mrs. Boscawen

BATH, 1793.

Health and every blessing which the new year can bring to my most dear and honoured friend, the ci-devant Lady of Rosedale, but now, I trust, of warm and cheerful Audley Street.

As soon as I came to Bath, our dear Bishop of London came to me with a dismal countenance, and told me that I should repent it on my death-bed, if I, who knew so much of the habits and sentiments of the lower order of people, did not write some little thing tending to open their eyes under their present wild impressions of liberty and equality. It must be something level to their apprehensions, or

it would be of no use. In an evil hour, against my will and my judgment, on one sick day, I scribbled a little pamphlet called "*Village Politics, by Will Chip*"; and the very next morning after I had first conceived the idea, I sent it off to Rivington, changing my bookseller, in order the more surely to escape detection. It is as vulgar as heart can wish; but it is only designed for the most vulgar class of readers. I heartily hope I shall not be discovered; as it is a sort of writing repugnant to my nature; though indeed it is rather a question of *peace* than of *politics*. I did not send one to you, my dear madam, nor to any friend, as that generally furnishes a clue to discovery, which it was my object to avoid. Rivington sends me word that "they go off very greatly, and that the purchasers are people of rank." The very day the bishop came to me, Mrs. Montagu sent me a strong request on the same subject. Having relieved my conscience by owning my malefactions to you, my dear madam, I proceed to tell you that I know no more good of the author than of the book.

It is impossible to divert one's thoughts, one's talk, or one's pen long together from the horrors that have taken possession of every creature that has an atom of head or heart left. Yet I am afraid that even the bloody catastrophe of this deplorable tragedy has not filled up the measure of French iniquity. If ever one of their sixty-six monarchs deserved the appellation of *most Christian King*, surely it was the innocent Louis. When I used to

weep for his calamities, little did I think I should ever have been benefited by his piety ; or instructed and edified by his conduct and his compositions.

It is only in the *testament* of this murdered king, and in the *charge* you had the goodness to send me of the amiable Bishop of Leon, that my understanding and my principles have been refreshed with a little ci-devant christianity and good sense. I had the pleasure of *bestowing* pleasure by making that charge *faire le tour de ce quartier*, which is a good deal inhabited by considerable Roman Catholics, Howards, etc. They met every day at mass, as soon as it was light, and hung their chapel with black.

My franking friends are so good as to send me down loads of papers, pamphlets, etc. as they come out : but I confess I have not had *nerves* enough to trust my eyes with the inspection of that horrible guillotine. I can *generalize* misery with as much comfort as another ; but there is something in detail and actual representation which I cannot stand. But of all the things I have seen, none appear more seasonable, or seem likely to do more good than Bishop Watson's sermon, and especially his appendix, which he had the goodness to send me. The *date* of the sermon, before the question was agitated, adds to its value, and both coming from such a known assertor of liberty must open many eyes.

I enclose you a hasty sketch, excited by indignation on first reading Dupont's speech, some weeks

since, which was sent me by the Bishop of London. It struck me that such poison should not be doled out to the English without some corrective. These dreadful subjects so run away with one, that I have neither room nor time to say more than that I hope you have quite lost that bad cold, and that those you most care about are well. Alas! must we go to war?

H. M.

H. More to Mrs. Boscawen

BATH, 1797.

If I *do* write, quoth I to myself, in the humour I am in, I shall convince my most honoured friend that I have no wit; and if I do *not* write I shall prove to a demonstration that I have no gratitude. Thus the matter stood for a long time in exact equipoise; but at last recollecting that wit was only a *talent*, and gratitude a *virtue*, I was resolved to secure to myself the reputation and comfort of the one, though at the risk, nay the certainty, of forfeiting all pretensions to the other. Now, Madam, I appeal to your discernment, if I have not made the better choice? Of attaining to the one I despair; it is a rare but dangerous present—but come, Gratitude! thou peaceful, amiable virtue, and confess (though thou art less addicted to confession than to feeling) if I did not cherish thee in my heart, this morning, when I received so delightful a letter from Audley Street. Nothing could

have diminished the entire pleasure that letter gave me, but the unpleasant intelligence of the indisposition of the writer.

I did not get hither to my winter quarters till Christmas. I was so earnestly pressed to halt at Stoke, with the Duchess, in my way, that I complied for three or four days. Very strong indeed were the entreaties of my noble hostess that I should remain during the visit of the whole house of Manners, but I was constrained to be equally firm in my refusal.

Since I have been here I have so entirely lost my cough as to be able to drink the waters, which do me much good. Now, my dear Madam, if you do not think here is already a sufficient quantity of egotism, I will go on to tell you, that though I go to the pump, I do not make any visits, not having set my foot to the ground these two months. I shall, however, make an exception in favour of your neighbours, Lord and Lady Kenyon, who have done me the honour to desire to be acquainted with me. I am much pleased with the plain unadorned integrity, the simplicity of manners, the respect for piety, of this great Lord Chief Justice : I think he discovers more reverence for virtue and religion in his decisions than any law leader I remember.

My friends are extremely kind, so that I have full as much company as my heart can wish. Lady Herries is here, with the full use of her limbs, which I am glad of ; though, if they had been my limbs, I question if I should have thought the use

of them worth purchasing at the expense of living abroad :—better be dying in England, than well any where else, is my maxim.

Grave as the times are, Bath never was so gay ; princes and kings that will be, and princes and kings that have been, pop upon you at every corner ; the Stadtholder and Prince of Wales only on a flying visit ; but their Highnesses of York are become almost inhabitants, and very sober and proper their behaviour is. The Duchess contributes, by her residence in it, to make our street alive. I had the honour of spending a morning with her Royal Highness. Her conversation was judicious and lively : the waters have been of service to her ; she has had the goodness to present me with a beautiful little box, with her hair set round with pearls on the lid.

Lady Waldegrave writes me but a sad account of poor Lord Oxford. Of Mrs. Carter's recovery, though slow, I hear better accounts. I say nothing of war, because I am weary of the word, nor of peace, because I lose all hope of it. I am thankful, however, that the fault does not rest with us ; one can bear the affliction far better, when one has not to bear the guilt also.

Alas ! my dear Madam, your letter has just arrived which announces the affecting tidings of Lord Oxford's death—affecting in no small degree : though I have been in daily expectation of such an event taking place, my feelings are quite overcome when I call to remembrance that

kindness which knew no interruption during twenty years.

I am, dear Madam,
Affectionately yours,
H. More.

H. More to her Sister Martha

Fulham Palace, *May*, 1797.

I am just come from attending the royal nuptials at St. James's. It was indeed a most august spectacle. If, indeed, it had been only the spectacle and the procession which I could have seen, I should have had little curiosity ; but the Bishop, who has the management of the whole chapel, secured me a place, with Mrs. Porteus, so near the altar that I could hear every word distinctly. The royal bride behaved with great feeling and modesty. The Prince of Wirtemberg had also a very becoming solemnity in his behaviour. The King and Queen wept, but took great pains to restrain themselves. As I looked at the sixteen handsome and magnificently dressed royals sitting round the altar, I could not help thinking how many plans were perhaps at that very moment forming for their destruction ; for the bad news from Ireland had just arrived. They talk of the number of acknowledged malcontents being 150,000, but I believe not a large part of that number have arms. I forgot to say that the King gave his daughter away, and it was really very affecting. The Archbishop read

the service with great emphasis and solemnity. The newspapers will have described all the crape, and the foils, and the feathers, and the diamonds, etc. We were four hours in chapel.

Lord Oxford's executors, Mrs. Damer and Lord Frederick Campbell, have sent me word they will return all my letters, which they have found carefully preserved. I am also applied to in form to consent to give up such of his letters to me as are fit for publication. I have told them how extremely careful I am as to the publication of letters, and that I cannot make any positive engagement; but that if when I get to Cowslip Green, I should find on looking them over, that any are quite disencumbered of private history, private characters, etc. —I probably shall not withhold those in my possession; but I am persuaded that after they are reduced as much as will be necessary, there will be little left for publication.

I dined one day at Admiral Gambier's (my kindly-attached friend with whom I spent so many pleasant days at Teston) to meet Sir Charles Middleton, who really brings a comfortable account of Mrs. Bouverie; and I begin to take hope about her.

The Morning Chronicle and other *pious newspapers* have laboured to throw such a stigma on the association for the better observance of Sunday that the timid great are sheering off, and very few indeed have signed. It has, however, led to so much talk and discussion on the subject, as to produce a very considerable effect, and a number of

high people have said, that, though they will not bind themselves in form, they will conform to the spirit of the resolution. I doubt, however, whether those who show a timidity so little creditable to them, will do much. The Duchess Dowager of Beaufort, with her usual kindness to me, said that if I wished it, she would certainly sign ; otherwise she thought such an old woman could add no credit to it ; but I suggested that her high rank might attract others. Friday I dined at the Bishop of London's, and spent the evening at Gloucester House. I know not whether it comes under the act of treason, or misprison of treason, to go to a royal house in colours, for people are in such deep mourning as to wear black handkerchiefs and gloves. It is not, however, universal, for at a small party on Saturday, at Mr. M. Montagu's, many were in colours. I met there Lord St. Helens, Mr. King, the American minister, and others of that stamp.

I was much affected at the death of poor Mason. The Bishop of London was just reading us a sonnet he had sent him on his seventy-second birth-day, rejoicing in his unimpaired strength and faculties ; it ended with saying that he had still a muse able to praise his Saviour and his God—when the account of his death came. It was pleasing to find his last poetical sentiments had been so devout ; I would that more of his writings had expressed the same strain of devotion, though I have no doubt of his having been piously disposed ; but the Warburtonian school was not favourable to a devotional

spirit. I used to be pleased with his turn of conversation, which was of a peculiar cast.

I have been meeting Mr. Smelt, who at seventy-two is come up to equip himself for entering into the military ; there is patriotism for you ! I dined yesterday with Mrs. Goodenough, the accomplished sister of the Speaker.

H. More to her Sister

FULHAM PALACE, 1799.

I have been rather royal lately ; on Monday I spent the morning at the Pavilion at Hampton Court, with the Duchess of Gloucester, and yesterday passed the morning with little Princess Charlotte at Carlton House. She is the most sensible and genteel little creature you would wish to see. I saw Carlton House and gardens, in company with the pretty Princess, who had great delight in opening the drawers, uncovering the furniture, curtains, lustres, etc. to show me ; my visit was to Lady Elgin, who has been spending some days here.

For the Bishop of London's entertainment and mine, the Princess was made to exhibit all her learning and accomplishments : the first consisted in her repeating the " Little Busy Bee," the next in dancing very gracefully, and in singing " God save the King," which was really affecting (all things considered) from her little voice. Her understanding is so forward that they really might begin to teach her many things. It is perhaps the highest praise, after all, to say, that she is exactly like the

child of a private gentleman ; wild and natural, but sensible, lively and civil. I am really anxious that you should be using the new chaise, and will immediately take measures for having it conveyed.

H. More to W. Gray, Esq.

BARLEY WOOD, *Aug.* 14, 1809.

. . . I have not seen the —— —— ; indeed I take no delight in controversy. To see others angry has such a tendency to make me angry, that I am afraid of getting my temper soured, and my heart hardened, by dwelling much on what even good people say against each other. It will be the glory of a better world, that the passions and prejudices, and different views, which alienated good men from each other on earth, will all be done away, and perfect love and harmony be the consequence of perfect light and knowledge. Perhaps, my own worthless self having been so frequently the object of attack has been of use to me in my judgment of others. It has certainly been of use to myself, in advancing the tranquillity and acquiescence of my own mind, under almost every species of assault. I have never written, and (by the grace of God) I never *will* write, one line in my own vindication, though Mr. C. in his last Review talks of my "suckling babes of grace," and "making *hell broth*" ; advises the bishop against a book which is intended to overturn the church ; that the deepest mischiefs lurk in every page of

"Cœlebs"; and as the book is in many hands, he feels it his duty to say, "*Caveat Emptor*." My dear Sir, shall I not pity the poor man on the borders of fourscore, who *could* write such a criticism after having written a poem called "*Calvary*"? Alas! for poor human nature, that he has not forgiven, at the end of thirty years, that in my gay and youthful days a tragedy of mine was preferred to one of his which perhaps better deserved success.

With what delight do I turn from these petty grievances, to the information you gave me of the flourishing state of religion, not only in your neighbourhood, but in your *cathedral*. This is indeed a deep cause for thankfulness. For the character of Mr. Richardson I feel the highest reverence. He seems to have been an instrument singularly honoured—the sun of no inconsiderable system.

And now, farewell! Pray for me, my dear Sir, that I may be more detached from the world, more spiritually-minded, less engrossed by the things of time and sense, which my judgment despises, but which absorb too much of those affections which are due to superior and eternal things. What unspeakable consolation it is that I have a better righteousness than my own to trust to! May I trust to it more entirely, for I am sure there is no other trust! Believe me,

With real respect and esteem,
your greatly obliged,
and faithful servant,
H. More.

H. More to Mr. and Mrs. Huber

Barley Wood, 1820.

My dear Friends,

At length it has pleased God to enable me to write, to thank you both for your kind letter, which I was happy to receive. I have been confined to the house ever since last September, and to my chamber since Christmas, and a good part of that time to my bed. I am, thanks to Almighty goodness, growing gradually much better. I have this week seen a friend or two for an hour, and breakfasted twice in the next room.

Madame Necker has treated me and my bold remonstrance with a delicacy which shows the refinement of her own elevated mind. Truly glad should I be if such a mind could be brought to receive "the truth as it is in Jesus"; for those fine speculations which she and her accomplished relative have fed on as Christianity, afford no solid relief to a *fallen creature*; and such the best of human beings are by nature. The wisest and the best stand in as much need of being redeemed by the blood of Christ, and of being sanctified and guided by the Holy Spirit, as the most illiterate and the most unworthy. The two great principles on which our salvation *must* be founded, are faith and holiness; faith, without which it is impossible to please God—holiness, without which no man can see the Lord. Those are not *my* words, as you know, but the words of the great apostle. Madame Necker

says, " a muse may be a missionary "—I agree with her ; but then it must be such a muse as that of Cowper or Milton, in whom the sanctity directs and elevates the poetry ; where genius is made subservient to Christian principle, and embellishes it without altering its character or debasing its purity. These two are *Bible poets*, who received the gospel in simplicity, and adorned it without any departure from its truth.

This amiable lady a little mistakes my character and turn of mind. She supposes me to be so strict that I disapprove the *lighter* parts of her books ; so far is this from being the case, that I delight in narrative, in anecdote, and in traits of character. It is only on the more *serious* passages that I took the liberty to animadvert. I should not have offered a remark on the *omission* of religion ;—it is only on what appears to me to be *mistakes* in religion that I presumed to speak. Her powerful intellect, her high cultivation, her candid mind, of which she has given so amiable an instance in her bearing with my impertinent observations, impel me to observe what a fine soil that mind would be, in which to plant genuine unadulterated Christianity. Though a self-denying, humbling religion, it gives more than it takes away ; it gives a peace which the world, with all its promises and blandishments, cannot give. It gives humility, which far from prohibiting the exercise of talents, only encourages their consecration to him who gave them, with that prostration of heart, and self-renouncing spirit, which will lead

the possessor to exclaim, " Who hath made me to differ " ? What have I that I have not received ?

In the midst of my illness, Cadell wrote to entreat me to preface a new edition of " Moral Sketches " with a short tribute to our late lamented King. My friend wrote him word it was utterly impossible, that I might as well attempt to fly, as to write. A week after, supposing me to be better, he again renewed his entreaty. I was not better, but worse. I fancied, however, that what was difficult, might not be impossible. So, having got everybody out of the way, I furnished myself with pen, ink, and paper, which I concealed in my bed, and next morning, in a high fever, with my pulse above a hundred, without having formed one idea, bolstered up, I began to scribble. I got on for about seven pages, my hand being almost as incompetent as my head. I hid my scrawl, and said not a word, while my doctor and my friends wondered at my increased debility. After a strong opiate, I next morning returned to my task, and finished seven pages more, and delivered my almost illegible papers to my friend to transcribe and send away. I got well scolded, but I loved the King, and was carried through by a sort of affectionate impulse ; so it stands as a preface to the seventh edition. You will be as much surprised as myself that this slight work should have made its way so rapidly in these distracted times, which, the booksellers tell me, have been the most unfavourable to literature that they have ever known. The preface is just such a meagre

performance as you would expect from the writer, and from the strange circumstances of the writing.

Thursday, July 13.—I began this letter some days ago, and wrote a little as I felt able, but have since had a considerable return of fever and pain. At my time of life I am not so sanguine as to expect anything like perfect restoration ; nor am I anxious about it ; all I desire is a prepared mind, an obedient heart, and a resigned spirit. I am surrounded with many mercies, and have the consolation of knowing that I have the prayers of many Christian friends.

Dear Wilberforce has been more active and more brilliant than ever, if that were possible, this year. May God preserve his precious life, which he seems to be wearing out by incessant hard labour.

My heavy, and truly irreparable domestic loss has been, as you will believe, bitterly felt by me during this confinement of nine months ; but the time is short, and we are all hastening, if we spend that short time well, to a country where there is neither sin nor suffering.

As I address both, I conclude with saying, may God bless you both.

H. More.

H. More to Hart Davis, Esq.

[Barley Wood], 1822.

I was much affected yesterday with a report of the death of my ancient and valued friend Mrs.

Garrick. She was in her hundredth year! I spent above twenty winters under her roof, and gratefully remember not only their personal kindness, but my first introduction, through them, into a society remarkable for rank, literature, and talents. Whatever was most distinguished in either, was to be found at their table. He was the very soul of conversation.

My dear Sir, most faithfully yours,

H. More.

IMPRESSIONS OF LORD MACAULAY
(IN LETTERS TO HIS FATHER)

IMPRESSIONS OF LORD MACAULAY

H. More to Zachary Macaulay

BARLEY WOOD, *Aug.* 7, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR,

I snatch the occasion of Mr. R. Grant being here to convey a line under his cover, so that it must be a hurrying one. As far as my poor judgment goes, it appears to me that, if all other things can be brought to suit, you cannot do better than adopt the plan of which you have conceived the idea, of removing to Westminster for the purpose of placing Tom at school there *by day*. It is only with this limitation that I should think it a safe measure. Throwing boys headlong into these great public schools always puts me in mind of the practice of the Scythian mothers, who threw their new-born infants into the river; the greatest part perished; but the few who possessed great strength, and who were worth saving, came out with additional vigour from the experiment. Yours, like Edwin, "is no vulgar boy," and will require attention in proportion to his great superiority of intellect and quickness of passion. He ought to have competitors. He is like the prince who refused to play with anything but kings.

Such a place as Westminster School (with the safety of the paternal hearth during all the intervals

of study) will tie down his roving mind, and pin his desultory pursuits to a point. At present, conscious that he has no rival worthy to break a lance with him, he may not pursue the severer parts of study with sufficient ardour, sure as he must be of comparative success. Next to religion, there is no such drill to the mind, no such tamer, as the hard study and discipline of these schools. In all other respects, I think sufficiently ill of them. Nor would I, for all the advantages which the intellect may obtain, throw his pure and uncorrupted mind into such a scene of danger. You having him to sleep at home, as well as to inspect in the evening, will, with the blessing of God, protect him from all mischief of this sort. I never saw any one bad propensity in him—nothing except natural frailty and ambition, inseparable, perhaps, from such talents and so lively an imagination. He appears sincere, veracious, tender-hearted, and affectionate. I observed *you* have a great ascendancy over him. Your presence restrained the vehemence of his eloquence, without shutting up his frankness, or impairing his affection. You are quite his oracle. I trust you will always preserve this influence. I observe with pleasure that, though he was quite wild till the ebullitions of his muse were discharged, he thought no more of them afterwards, than the ostrich is said to do of her eggs after she has laid them. . . .

Yours, my dear Sir, Very sincerely,

H. More.

H. More to Zachary Macaulay

BARLEY WOOD, [about *July*, 1815].

MY DEAR SIR,

I wanted Tom to write to-day, but as he is likely to be much engaged with a favourite friend, and I shall have no time to-morrow, I scribble a line. This friend is a sensible youth at Woolwich: he is qualifying for the artillery. I overheard a debate between them on the comparative merits of Eugene and Marlborough as generals. The quantity of reading that Tom has poured in, and the quantity of writing he has poured out, is astonishing. It is in vain I have tried to make [him] subscribe to Sir Henry Saville's notion, that the poets are the best writers next to those who write prose. We have poetry for breakfast, dinner and supper. He recited *all* Palestine, while we breakfasted, to our pious friend Mr. Whalley, at my request, and did it incomparably. I was pleased with his delicacy in one thing. You know that the Italian poets, like the French, too much indulge in the profane habit of attesting the Supreme Being; but, without a hint from me, whenever he comes to the sacred name, he reverently passes it over. . . . His fine promise of mind expands more and more, and, what is extraordinary, he has as much accuracy in his expression, as spirit and vivacity in his imagination; I like, too, that he takes a lively interest in all passing events, and that the *child* is still preserved; I like to see him as boyish as he is studious, and

that he is as much amused with making a pat of butter as a poem. Though loquacious, he is very docile, and I don't remember a single instance in which he has persisted in doing anything when he saw we did not approve of it. Several men of sense and learning have been struck with the union of gaiety and rationality in his conversation. It was a pretty trait of him yesterday; being invited to dine abroad, he hesitated, then said, "No; I have so few days that I will give them all to you." And he said to-day at dinner, when speaking of his journey, "I know not whether to think on my departure with most pain or pleasure—with most kindness for my friends, or affection for my parents."

Sometimes we converse in ballad-rhymes, sometimes in Johnsonian sesquipedalians; at tea, we condescend to riddles and charades. He rises early, and walks an hour or two before breakfast, generally composing verses. I encourage him to live much in the open air; this, with great exercise on these airy summits, I hope, will invigorate his body; though this frail body is sometimes tired, the spirits are never exhausted. He is, however, not sorry to be sent to bed soon after nine, and seldom stays to our supper.

A new poem produced is less incorrect than its predecessors—it is an excellent satire on radical reform, under the title of "Clodpole and the Quack-doctor." It is really good. I am glad to see that they are thrown by as soon as they have

been once read, and he thinks no more of them. He has very quick perceptions of the beautiful and defective in composition. I received your note last night, and Tom his humbling one. I tell him he is incorrigible in the way of tidiness. The other day, talking of what were the symptoms of a gentleman, he said with humour, and much *good* humour, that he had certain infallible marks of one; which were, neatness, love of cleanliness, and delicacy in his person. I know not when I have written so long a scrawl, but I thought you and his good mother would feel an interest in any trifles which related to him. I hope it will please God to prosper his journey, and restore him in safety to you. Let us hear of his arrival,

Yours, my dear Sir,

Very sincerely,

H. More.

H. More to Zachary Macaulay

Barley Wood, *May* 22, 1820.

. . . Tom's anacreontic is exquisite. It is almost incredible that he could do it offhand. There is an airiness and spirit, and lightness equal to Catullus; and far better than anything in Waller or Prior, but how can the grave College dons tempt the boys with such subjects? This morsel evidences as much true taste as anything Tom has written. I congratulate him to the Scholarship. . . .

Very sincerely,

H. More.

AN EPISTLE AND MY COURT

AN EPISTLE

H. More to Dr. Kennicot (Canon of Christchurch)

HAMPTON, *Dec.* 24, 1782.

DEAR DROMY,[1]

Pray send word if *Ante*[2] is come, and also how *Ele*[3] does, to your very affectionate

RHYNEY.[4]

NOTES ON THE ABOVE EPISTLE, BY A COMMENTATOR OF THE LATTER END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

This epistle is all that is come down to us of this voluminous author, and is probably the only thing she ever wrote that was worth preserving, or which might reasonably expect to reach posterity. Her name is only presented to us in some beautiful hendecasyllables written by the best Latin poet of his time.—(*Bishop Lowth.*)

Note.[1]

Dromy.—From the termination of this address, it seems to have been written to a woman, though there is no internal evidence to support this hypothesis. The best critics are much puzzled about the orthography of this abbreviation. Wartonius, and

other skilful etymologists, contend that it ought to be spelt *Drummy*, being addressed to a lady who was probably fond of warlike instruments, and who had a singular predilection for a *canon*. Drummy, say they, was a tender diminutive of drum, as the best authors in their more familiar writings now begin to use *gunny* for *gun*. But *Hurdius*, a contemporary critic, contends with more probability that it ought to be written *Drome*, from Hippodrome : a learned leech [1] and elegant bard of Bath, having left it upon record that this lady spent much of her time at the riding-school, being a very exquisite judge of horsemanship. *Colmanus* and *Horatius Strawberriensis* insist that it ought to be written *Dromo*, in reference to the Dromo Lorarius of the Latin dramatist.

Note.[2]

Ante.—Scaliger 3d says, this name simply signifies the appellation of uncle's wife, and ought to be written *Aunte*. But here again are various readings. Philologists of yet greater name affirm that it was meant to designate *pre-eminence*, and therefore ought to be written *ante*, before, from the Latin ; a language now pretty well forgotten, though the authors who wrote in it are still preserved in French translations. The younger Madame Dacier insists that this lady was against all men, and that it ought to be spelt *anti* : but this Kennicottus, a Rabbi of recondite learning, with much critical wrath vehemently contradicts ; affirming it to have been impossible she could have been against all mankind, whom all mankind admired. He adds that *ante* is for *antelope*, and is emblemati-

[1] Dr. Harrington.

cally used to express an elegant and slender animal; or that it is an elongation of *ant*, the emblem of virtuous citizenship.

Note.[3]

Ele.—Here criticism is confounded, and etymology is swallowed up in the boundless ocean of conjecture. Some have pretended that it should be written E.L.A. which are the initials of *elegant* and *learned antiquary*. The following flight of an hardy imagination is proposed: the profound mythologist[1] (of whom a great female critic has said, "That he was born in all ages and lived in all countries"), has proved that the poems of Rowley were really *ancient*; the slashing *Tyrwhittius* has proved with equal certainty that they are *modern*; while a *right lernede clerke*[2] has no less demonstrably proved that they were not *written at all*. These opposite opinions seem all as clear as any proposition in Euclid; yet as the principal of these poems is called the tragedy of *Ella*, may not the *Ele* mentioned in this epistle be, by a small corruption, the famous *Ella*, Governor of Bristol Castle? and so here comes in a fourth hypothesis, that he himself was indubitably the author of these controverted poems.

Note.[4]

Rhyney.—Or as some read it Rhyny. This is doubtless the name of the author of this admired and valuable epistle, which has afforded such rich materials to modern criticism: yet there are not wanting those who controvert this plain fact. Some

[1] Mr. Bryant. [2] Dr. Heberden.

refer this name to the geographical relation between the author and the place of her birth, and conclude that she was born on the banks of the Rhine; a bold and happy metonymy; as we say, Ithacus, and the Pylian, for Ulysses and Nestor. Her having been in the house of a very amiable German, at the time of her writing this famous epistle, confirms this opinion. Others who assert that in her youth she had been addicted to poetry, think with more reason that *Rhyny* may be derived from *Rhyno*, an old provincial term for money; there having been in all ages a beautiful antithesis between *poetry* and *pence*.

MY COURT

Sketch of my Court at Windsor Terrace [Clifton], 1828.

The Duke of Gloucester, Sir Thomas Acland, Sir Edmond Hartopp, and Mr. Harford, my sportsmen. Mr. Battersby, Mr. Pigott, and Mrs. Addington, my fruiterers. Mrs. Walker Gray, my confectioner. Mr. Edward Brice, my fishmonger. Dr. Carrick, my state physician and zealous friend. Mrs. La Touche, my silk mercer and clothier. Bishop of Salisbury, my oculist. Miss Roberts's, my counsellors, *not* solicitors; for they give more than they take. Miss Davids', my old friends and new neighbours. Messrs. Hensman and Elwin, my spiritual directors. Mr. Wilberforce, my guide, philosopher, and friend. Miss Frowd, my domestic chaplain, secretary, and house apothecary, knitter, and lamp-lighter, missionary to my numerous and learned seminaries, and without controversy, the queen of clubs.[1] Mr. Huber, my incomparable translator, who, by his superiority, puts the original out of countenance. Mr. Cadell, accoucheur to the Muses, who has introduced many a sad sickly brat to see the light, but whispers that they must not depend on a long life!

[1] In allusion to her village clubs.

VILLAGE LIFE AND THE SCHOOLS

VILLAGE LIFE AND THE SCHOOLS

H. More to Mr. Wilberforce

GEORGE HOTEL, CHEDDAR, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

Though this is but a *romantic place*, as my friend Matthew well observed, yet you would laugh to see the bustle I am in. I was told we should meet with great opposition if I did not try to propitiate the chief despot of the village, who is very rich, and very brutal; so I ventured into the den of this monster, in a country as savage as himself, near Bridgewater. He begged I would not think of bringing any religion into the country; it was the worst thing in the world for the poor, for it made them lazy and useless. In vain did I represent to him that they would be more industrious as they were better principled; and that, for my own part, I had no selfish views in what I was doing. He gave me to understand that he knew the world too well to believe either the one or the other. Somewhat dismayed to find that my success bore no proportion to my submissions, I was almost discouraged from more visits; but I found that friends must be secured at all events, for if these rich savages set their faces against us, and influenced

the poor people, it was clear that nothing but hostilities would ensue ; so I made eleven more of these agreeable visits ; and, as I improved in the art of canvassing, had better success. Miss Wilberforce would have been shocked, had she seen the petty tyrants whose insolence I stroked and tamed, the ugly children I fondled, the pointers and spaniels I caressed, the cyder I commended, and the wine I swallowed. After these irresistible flatteries, I inquired of each if he could recommend to me a house ; and said that I had a little plan which I hoped would secure their orchards from being robbed, their rabbits from being shot, their poultry from being stolen, and which might lower the poor-rates. If effect be the best proof of eloquence, then mine was a good speech, for I gained at length the hearty concurrence of the whole people, and their promise to discourage or favour the poor in proportion as they were attentive or negligent in sending their children. Patty, who is with me, says she has good hope that the hearts of some of these rich poor wretches may be touched ; they are at present as ignorant as the beasts that perish, intoxicated every day before dinner, and plunged in such vices as make me begin to think London a virtuous place. By their assistance, I procured immediately a good house, which, when a partition is taken down, and a window added, will receive a great number of children. The house, and an excellent garden of almost an acre of ground, I have taken at once for six guineas and a half per

year. I have ventured to take it for *seven years*—there 's courage for you ! It is to be put in order *immediately* ; " for the night cometh " : and it is a comfort to think, that though I may be dust and ashes in a few weeks, yet by that time this business will be in actual motion. I have written to different manufacturing towns for a mistress, but can get nothing hitherto. As to the mistress for the *Sunday* school, and the religious part, I have employed Mrs. Easterbrook, of whose judgment I have a good opinion. I hope Miss W. will not be frightened, but I am afraid she must be called a methodist.

I asked the farmers if they had no resident curate ; they told me they had a right to insist on one ; which right, they confessed, they had never ventured to exercise, for fear *their tithes should be raised !* I blushed for my species. The Glebe House is good for my purpose. The Vicarage of Cheddar is in the gift of the Dean of Wells ; the value near fifty pounds per annum. The incumbent is a Mr. R. : who has something to do, but I cannot here find out what, in the University of Oxford, where he resides. The curate lives at Wells, twelve miles distant. They have only service once a week, and there is scarcely an instance of a poor person being visited, or prayed with. The living of Axbridge belongs to the Prebendary of Wiveliscombe, in the cathedral of Wells. The annual value is about fifty pounds. The incumbent, about sixty years of age. The Prebend to which this rectory belongs is in the gift of the

Bishop of Bath and Wells. Mr. G. is intoxicated about six times a week, and very frequently is prevented from preaching by two black eyes, honestly earned by fighting. Mr. —— is a middle-aged man; of his character they know nothing. The curate, a sober young man.

Love to Miss W.

Your much obliged,

H. More.

H. More to Mr. Wilberforce

[Cowslip Green], 1791.

My dear Sir,

Perhaps it is the best answer to your question, to describe the origin and progress of one of our schools as detached from the rest. And I select Cheddar, which you were the immediate cause of our taking up. After the discoveries made of the deplorable state of that place, my sister and I went and took a lodging at a little public-house there, to see what we could do, for we were utterly at a loss how to begin. We found more than two thousand people in the parish, almost all very poor; no gentry, a dozen wealthy farmers, hard, brutal, and ignorant. We visited them all, picking up at one house (like fortune-tellers) the name and character of the next. We told them we intended to set up a school for their poor. They did not like it. We assured them we did not desire a shilling from them, but wished for their concurrence, as we knew

they could influence their workmen. One of the farmers seemed pleased and civil ; he was rich, but covetous, a hard drinker, and his wife a woman of loose morals, but good natural sense ; she became our friend, sooner than some of the decent and the formal, and let us a house, the only one in the parish that was vacant, at £7 per annum, with a good garden. Adjoining was a large ox-house ; this we roofed and floored ; and by putting in a couple of windows, it made a good school-room. While this was doing, we went to every house in the place, and found each a scene of the greatest ignorance and vice. We saw but one Bible in all the parish, and that was used to prop a flower-pot ! No clergyman had resided in it for forty years. One rode over, from Wells, three miles, to preach once on a Sunday, but no weekly duty was done, or sick persons visited : and children were often buried without any funeral service. Eight people in the morning, and twenty in the afternoon, was thought a good congregation. We spent our whole time in getting at the characters of all the people, the employment, wages, and number of every family ; and this we have done in our other nine parishes. On a fixed day, of which we gave notice in the church, all the women, with all their children above six years old, met us. We took an exact list from their account, and engaged one hundred and twenty to attend on the following Sunday. A great many refused to send their children, unless we would pay them for it ! and not a few refused,

because they were not sure of my intentions, being apprehensive that at the end of seven years, if they attended so long, I should acquire a power over them, and send them beyond sea. I must have heard this myself in order to have believed that so much ignorance existed out of Africa. While this was going on, we had set every engine to work to find proper teachers. On this every thing depended. I had the happiness to find a woman of excellent natural sense, great knowledge of the human heart, activity, zeal, and uncommon piety. She had had a good fortune for one in middling life, but a wicked son had much reduced it. She had, however, still an estate of £40 a year, or very nearly. She brought with her a daughter, twenty-five years old, quite equal to herself in all other points; in capacity superior.

It was winter, and we all met at the school on Sunday morning at nine o'clock, having invited many parents to be present at the opening. We had drawn up some rules, which were read; then some suitable portions of Scripture; part of the 34th Psalm; then a hymn sung; and then a prayer read, composed for the occasion.

For the first year, these excellent women had to struggle with every kind of opposition, so that they were frequently tempted to give up their laborious employ. They well entitled themselves to £30 per annum salary, and some little presents. We established a Weekly School of thirty girls, to learn

reading, sewing, knitting, and spinning. The latter, though I tried three sorts, and went myself to almost every clothing-town in the county, did not answer—partly from the exactions of the manufacturer, and partly from its not suiting the genius of the place. They preferred knitting after the school hours on week-days. The mother or daughter visited the sick, chiefly with a view to their spiritual concerns; but we concealed the true motive at first; and in order to procure them access to the houses and hearts of the people, they were furnished, not only with medicine, but with a little money, which they administered with great prudence. They soon gained their confidence, read and prayed with them, and in all respects did just what a good clergyman does in other parishes.

At the end of a year we perceived that much ground had been gained among the poor; but the success was attended with no small persecution from the rich, though some of them grew more favourable. I now ventured to have a sermon read after school on a Sunday evening, inviting a few of the parents, and keeping the grown-up children; the sermons were of the most awakening sort, and soon produced a sensible effect. It was at first thought a very methodistical measure, and we got a few broken windows; but quiet perseverance, and the great prudence with which the zeal of our good mistresses was regulated, carried us through. Many reprobates were, by the blessing of God, awakened, and

many swearers and sabbath-breakers reclaimed. The numbers both of young and old scholars increased, and the daily life and conversation of many seemed to keep pace with their religious profession on the Sunday.

We now began to distribute Bibles, Prayer Books, and other good books, but never at random, and only to those who had given some evidence of their loving and deserving them. They are always made the reward of superior learning, or some other merit, as we can have no other proof that they will be read. Those who manifest the greatest diligence, get the books of most importance. During my absence in the winter, a great many will learn twenty or thirty chapters, psalms, and hymns. At the end of three years, during the winter the more serious of the parents began to attend on a Wednesday night ; and on Tuesday nights, twenty or thirty young people of superior piety met at the school to read the Scriptures, and hear them explained.

Finding the wants and distresses of these poor people uncommonly great (for their wages are but 1s. per day), and fearing to abuse the bounty of my friends, by a too indiscriminate liberality, it occurred to me that I could make what I had to bestow go much further by instituting clubs, or societies for the women, as is done for men in other places. It was no small trouble to accomplish this ; for though the subscription was only three half-pence a week, it was more than they could always raise ; yet the

object appeared so important, that I found it would be good economy privately to give widows and other very poor women money to pay their club. After combating many prejudices, we carried this point, which we took care to involve in the general system, by making it subservient to the schools; the rules of the club restraining the women to such and such points of conduct respecting the schools. In some parishes we have one hundred and fifty poor women thus associated: you may guess who are the patronesses.

We have an anniversary feast of tea, and I get some of the clergy, and a few of the better sort of people to come to it. We wait on the women, who sit and enjoy their dignity. The journal and state of affairs is read after church; and we collect all the facts we can as to the conduct of the villagers; whether the church has been more attended, fewer or more frauds, less or more swearing, scolding, or sabbath-breaking. All this is produced for or against them, in battle array, in a little sort of sermon made up of praise, censure, and exhortation, as they may be found to have merited.

One rule is, that any girl bred in the school, who continues when grown up to attend its instructions, and has married in the past year with a fair character, is presented on this day with five shillings, a pair of white stockings, and a new Bible; and several very good girls have received this public testimony to their virtuous conduct. Out of this club (to which we find it cheaper to contribute a few

guineas, than to give at random) a sick woman receives 3s. a week, 7s. 6d. for a lying-in, etc. etc.

We are now in our sixth year at Cheddar, and two hundred children and above two hundred old people constantly attend. God has blessed the work beyond all my hopes. The farmer's wife (our landlady) is become one of the most eminent Christians I know; and though we had last year the great misfortune to lose our elder mistress, her truly Christian death was made the means of confirming many in piety; and the daughter proceeds in the work with great ability. She has many teachers under her, who are paid 1s. a Sunday. Once a year each young person receives some articles of dress; but having so many other schools to run away with our money, we cannot do quite so much for any as I could wish. I should add, that we have about twenty young men, apprentices, servants, etc. who attend the whole Sunday with the humility of little children; and these, as they try hard to get a few clothes, we think it right to help with a small present. Amongst the collateral advantages resulting from the clubs, one is that the women who used to plead that they could not go to church, because they had no clothes, now come. The necessity of going to church in procession with us on the anniversary, raises an honest ambition to get something decent to wear, and the churches on Sunday are now filled with very clean-looking women. Perhaps a sketch of our ex-

penses may not be amiss ; it is not quite accurate ; I have no papers here.

	£.	s.	d.
House Rent	7	0	0
Repairs, white-washing, benches, etc.	2	0	0
Salary, head mistress . .	30	0	0
Under-teachers . . .	10	0	0
Bibles, Prayers, and other books	10	0	0
Caps and tippets, 100 girls, etc.	8	0	0
Shoes and stockings for 80 girls, etc.	15	0	0
Shirts, 20 young men . .	5	0	0
Club subscriptions and expenses	6	0	0
Incidental charities . . .	6	0	0
	£99	0	0

H. More to a Friend

[Bath], 1792.

My dear Madam,

When I wrote to Mr. T. about setting up a new school, I did not at all know of the scenes which have since opened upon us. I then only meant a little scheme in Shaw's parish, which would not require a great deal of our personal attention ; but if the *new* plan be put in practice, it will probably be the largest thing we have ever undertaken, and if it were *not* large, it would not be worth the great distance, difficulty, and expense attending it. I desired Mr. W[ilberforce] to communicate it to *you*. Now pray tell *him* that on Sunday we went down to reconnoitre, and if any thing ever *can* be done, it must be through the very fire. We had borrowed the

pulpit for a friend, but the opposition we met with so damped his sanguine spirits, that he had not courage to preach, because he said his indignation would make him imprudent, and his imprudence would make me angry. B., however, had prepared a very judicious sermon. Patty and I, though not more convinced than he of human depravity as a doctrine, yet being longer accustomed to its practical effects, were hardly moved at all. The great man of the place, illiterate but very sensible, is a shrewd speculative *atheist*. The next, a farmer of £1000 a year, let us know that we should not come there to make his ploughmen wiser men than himself; he did not want saints, but workmen. His wife, who, though she cannot read, seems to understand the doctrine of philosophical necessity, said, "the lower class were fated to be poor, and ignorant, and wicked; and that as wise as *we* were, we could not alter what was *decreed*." To this the husband subjoined, "Very true; besides he liked the parish very well as it was; if the young men *did* come and gamble before his house of a Sunday evening, when they might as well do it farther off, it was only for him to go out and swear at them, and they went away, and what could one desire more?" Before we went to church all these encouraging and ingenious things were conveyed to us; and during the prayers I took out my pencil and wrote across the church to B., to be sure to mention in his sermon, that the *ladies* would defray all the *expenses*—that they wanted nothing of the

parish but their countenance; desiring that after service the approvers of the institution would stay to give their support, and the enemies to propose their objections. This bright thought had a most happy effect. B. repeated three times, that no *subscriptions* would be asked, and every heart was cheered, and every eye brightened. We had after sermon an hour or two of discussion in the church.

Poor Fry had been so shocked at such (to him) new instances of depravity, that he said not a word, but looked ready to faint. The opposers were, however, by this time so softened, that several actually got warm enough to declare they had *no objection* to the ladies coming; and one rich man clapped his hands, and declared he believed it would turn out a very good *job*. It was affecting in the mean time to see the poor stand trembling behind lest the project should fail.

The sun shines in at my window, but I dare not be tempted by its blandishments, I am still a close prisoner.

I thought to have sent a line to Mr. T. but I have done my *possible* in writing for to-day.

H. More to Mr. Wilberforce

COWSLIP GREEN, *Sept.* 11 [1800].

MY DEAR SIR,

I had intended to delay the history of the Wedmore prosecution, until I saw how it would end; but your kind sympathy in our trials and diffi-

culties leads me to trouble you with it as far as we have gone. Our hostile farmers do not present us under the Conventicle Act, of which probably they know nothing; but on some old, and I believe obsolete statute, which requires every school-master to take out a licence. I dined by invitation with my diocesan, as I passed through Wells in my way home. His reception of me was highly cordial, and even affectionate; but he told me Wedmore was not under his jurisdiction, being a peculiar under the dean, in whose court we had been presented. Dr. Moss, however (the Bishop's son), at my request, had picked up the charges that had been exhibited against us. Among these were, that my school-master had called the bishops, dumb dogs; that he had said all who went to church, and did not come to hear him, would go to hell; and that he distributed books called "A Guide to Methodism." Could you believe that such impossible stuff could be seriously carried to a bishop, through the channel of some of his own chapter? One or two of these canons (poor creatures!) say that I carry everything before me, having *bitten* all the country clergymen, and secured the ear of the bishop. But the mischief lies deeper. A clergyman in my own neighbourhood, where we have a flourishing school, has turned Socinian, and is now enraged at the doctrines *we* teach. He is doing all possible injury to us and our schemes. This cause, too, *has a cause*—and this man's malice is inflamed by the Anti-Jacobin Magazine, which is spreading

more mischief over the land than almost any other book, because it is doing it under the mask of loyalty. It is representing all serious men as hostile to government; and our enemies here whisper that we are abetted by you, and such as you, to hurt the establishment. This is only an episode, for I must talk to you more at large, and see if no means can be employed to stop this spreading poison. I hear that the author is ——, who, having been refused some favour by the Bishop of London, exercises his malignity towards him in common with those whom he calls Methodists.

But to return to Wedmore. There is a new Dean of ——. I had no avenue to this man, who, I found, had been greatly prejudiced against us by the following means. He is not rich—has a large family, and when he came down to take possession, passed his time at the house of his agent, who happened to be the very attorney who was employed to appear against us at the visitation, when we were presented. Now this attorney breathes out threatenings and slaughters against my school; he being also the agent of the Wedmore farmers. I conceived the bold measure of telling my story to Mr. Windham, with whom my acquaintance was too slight to justify such a step; and knowing as I did, that the cause was prejudiced against me in his mind; that is, I knew that every Anti-Abolitionist in the world was of necessity an enemy to religious instruction at home. His answer, however, was highly obliging; written, as it was, amidst all the

bustle of public successes. You will be pleased with Windham's conduct in this business. What effect his mediation will produce, I have yet to learn.

Some farmers in a parish adjoining, where there is also a school, have been to the fortune-teller, to know if we are Methodists, and if our school is methodistical. The oracle returned an ambiguous answer, and desired to know what reason they had for suspecting it; the farmers replied, it was because we sung Watts's hymns. The sage returned for answer, this was no proof; had they no better reason? "Yes," they answered, "for if the *hymns* were not methodistical, the *tunes* were." The Pythian asked why they were so, the reply was, "because they were not in Farmer Clap's book!" I thought this fact ridiculous enough to amuse you. Yet these people are our judges; and there are not wanting those, who, though better taught, will listen to the representation of such accusers. In the midst of this clamour, poor Patty went down to the place two Sundays ago. The farmers called a vestry (to which she could not get admittance), to sign a paper to abolish the school. With great calmness she went on teaching the whole day. At night, about two hundred orderly people assembled as usual, but just as she was going to begin, two farmers came to the door, very tipsy, loudly vociferating that they would have no such methodistical doings, for that the sermon they had had in the morning was quite enough—their intoxication, however, did not give a very favourable evidence

of its good effects. After they had spent their violence, Patty told them it would be a serious thing if they should die that night, after having attempted to disturb a people who were solely met for religious purposes. One of them said, "How can you put such melancholy things in one's head, ma'am," and ran out. She quietly went through her business to a most respectful audience, whose solemn attention rewarded her for what she had gone through. On Sunday, we are going, if I am able, again; whether the violence he found to be abated or inflamed, you shall know. I hope it may please God to endue us with a proper temper, and quiet perseverance, and that these trials may help to purify our motives. I am better myself, but we have much domestic sickness and sorrow. May all work together for good! God bless you and yours.

Yours affectionately,

H. More.

H. More to the Bishop of Bath and Wells

[Cowslip Green], 1801.

My Lord,

It is with deep regret that I find myself compelled to trouble your Lordship with this letter, though your known liberality gives me more courage in taking a step which I should in any case feel it my duty to take. For, however firm my resolution has been, never to answer any of the calumnies under which I have been so long suffering: yet to your Lordship, as my diocesan, I feel myself accountable

for my conduct, attacked as it has been with a wantonness of cruelty which, in civilized places, few persons, especially of my sex, have been called to suffer. To the defenceless state of our sex, and to my declared resolution to return no answers, I attribute in great part this long and unmitigated persecution. I am not going to make your Lordship a party. Nor am I going to clear myself by accusing others. Of my assailants I will speak as little as possible. I wish I could avoid naming them altogether. . . .

As to connection with conventicles of any kind, I never had any. Had I been irregular, should I not have gone sometimes, during my winter residence at Bath, to Lady Huntingdon's chapel, a place of great occasional resort? Should I never have gone to some of Whitfield's or Wesley's tabernacles in London, where I have spent a long spring for near thirty years successively? Should I not have strayed now and then into some methodist meeting in the country? Yet not one of these things have I ever done. . . . Having observed, from the beginning of the French revolution, the arts used by the jacobinical writers to alienate the people from the church, by undermining their respect for its ministers, I made it a leading principle in the multitude of little tracts, which I wrote purposely to counteract their pestilent pamphlets, to introduce into almost every one of them an exemplary parish minister. As works of imagination had been employed to induce a contempt for the clerical

character, I thought these fictitious characters the most popular vehicles in which to convey an antidote to the reigning disease, and that by assiduously infusing this spirit into the very amusements of the lower classes, I might thus lead them insensibly to the habit of loving and reverencing the clergy.

Nor was I less amazed to find my *political* principles stigmatized by my accusers. Besides their general tendency, some of my tracts go directly to the defence of the constitution. Whether they were of any use in the moment of danger, it becomes not me to say. My enemies being judges, I should hope they were; as I can produce several letters of undeservedly high praise from those who are now loudest in the cry against me.

It has been broadly intimated, that I have laboured to spread French principles; and one of my schools is specifically charged with having *prayed for the success of the French.* Am I seriously to defend myself against such charges? I plead guilty to having written an answer to Dupont, the atheistical orator of France, and of having devoted the profits of this slight work, amounting to considerably above £200, to the relief of the French emigrant clergy. To perversions of this sort I am almost daily accustomed.

When I first established my schools, the poor women used to send crying infants of two or three years old, to the great disturbance of the rest, while they kept at home children of a fitter age to learn. This led us to make it one of the rules, not to

receive any under six years old. I told the mothers ours was a school, and not a nursery. On this simple circumstance has been built the astonishing charge, that I did not want to instruct children, but to pervert grown people. There is no end to instances of this sort, but a few may serve as a specimen. Not only are conversations printed which never took place, between me and persons whom I do not know, but about persons whose names I never heard. I am accused of being the abettor, not only of fanaticism and sedition, but of thieving and prostitution. To all these accusations or innuendos I have never answered one word; though some of my best friends advised me to answer them by a prosecution. This I declined, though I confess that the charge of murder could scarcely have shocked me more than that of disaffection or sedition. . . .

I am assured by those who have carefully read the different pamphlets against me, that whilst I am accused in one of seditious practices, I am reviled in another as an enemy to liberty; in one of being disaffected to church and state, in another of being a ministerial hireling and a tool of government. Nay the very tracts are specified for which "the *venal* hireling" was paid by the administration (by Mr. Pitt, I think). In one I am charged with praying for the success of the French, in another of fomenting, by my writings, the war with France, and savagely triumphing at every victory over those whom the author calls "those friends to

the general amelioration of human society." I am accused of delighting in a war, "which we madly carried on—which began in iniquity, and ended in disgrace." In one place, "of not believing" one word of Christianity; in another of idolizing the Athanasian creed, which "complicated piece of metaphysics" the author declares the church might spare, and which he advises me, when expunged from the Liturgy, "to order myself to be wrapped in as a winding-sheet."

But to return to my schools. When I settled in this country thirteen years ago, I found the poor in many of the villages sunk in a deplorable state of ignorance and vice. There were, I think, no Sunday schools in the whole district, except one in my own parish, which had been established by our respectable rector, and another in the adjoining parish of Churchill. This drew me to the more neglected villages, whose distance made it very laborious. Not one school there did I ever attempt to establish without the hearty concurrence of the clergyman of the parish. My plan of instruction is extremely simple and limited. They learn, on week-days, such coarse works as may fit them for servants. I allow of no writing for the poor. My object is not to make fanatics, but to train up the lower classes in habits of industry and piety. I knew no way of teaching morals but by teaching principles; or of inculcating Christian principles without imparting a good knowledge of scripture. I own I have laboured this point diligently.

My sisters and I always teach them ourselves every Sunday, except during our absence in the winter. By being out about thirteen hours, we have generally contrived to visit two schools the same day, and to carry them to their respective churches. When we had more schools, we commonly visited them on a Sunday. The only books we use in teaching are two little tracts, called "Questions for the Mendip Schools" (to be had of Hatchard). "The Church Catechism" (these are framed, and half a dozen hung up in the room). The Catechism, broken into short questions, Spelling Books, Psalter, Common Prayer, Testament, Bible. The little ones repeat "Watts's Hymns." The Collect is learned every Sunday. They generally learn the Sermon on the Mount, with many other chapters and psalms. Finding that what the children learned at school they commonly lost at home by the profaneness and ignorance of their parents, it occurred to me in some of the larger parishes to invite the latter to come at six on the Sunday evening, for an hour, to the school, together with the elder scholars. A plain printed sermon and a printed prayer is read to them, and a psalm is sung. I am not bribed by my taste, for, unluckily, I do not delight in music, but observing that singing is a help to devotion in others, I thought it right to allow the practice.

For many years I have given away annually, nearly two hundred Bibles, Common Prayer Books, and Testaments. To teach the poor to read, without

providing them with *safe* books, has always appeared to me an improper measure, and this consideration induced me to enter upon the laborious undertaking of the Cheap Repository Tracts.

In some parishes where the poor are numerous, such as Cheddar, and the distressed mining villages of Shipham and Rowbarrow, I have instituted, with considerable expense to myself, friendly benefit societies for poor women, which have proved a great relief to the sick and lying-in, especially in the late seasons of scarcity. We have in one single parish, an accumulation of between two and three hundred pounds (the others in proportion); this I have placed out in the funds. The late lady of the Manor of Cheddar, in addition to her kindness to my institutions there during her life, left, at her death, a legacy for the club, and another for the school, as a testimony to her opinion of the utility of both. We have two little annual festivities for the children and poor women of these clubs, which are always attended by a large concourse of gentry and clergy. . . .

I would appeal to any candid judge whether in an undertaking so difficult and extensive, while I was living far from all the schools, five, ten, and even fifteen miles, it would be wonderful if I should have been sometimes (it has not happened often) mistaken in the instruments I have employed; and if the most vigilant prudence could do more than discharge such as were proved to be improper. In a few instances, where none could be found properly

qualified on the spot, I have employed strangers; but in general the teachers have been taken from the parish, on the recommendation of the minister, or the principal inhabitants, or both. . . . The obnoxious Wedmore schoolmaster had notice to quit as soon after I came from London as the complaint was made, and was actually removed as soon as his wife recovered from her lying-in. I thought nothing could be more promising than this man. I found him carrying on a little trade in Bristol, after having failed in a greater, and he was an active member of the volunteer corps, and a tax-gatherer of the parish.

I need not inform your lordship why the illiterate, when they become religious, are more liable to enthusiasm than the better-informed. They have also a coarse way of expressing their religious sentiments, which often appears to be enthusiasm, when it is only vulgarity or quaintness. But I am persuaded your lordship will allow that this does not furnish a reason why the poor should be left destitute of religious instruction. That the knowledge of the Bible should lay men more open to the delusions of fanaticism on the one hand, or of jacobinism on the other, appears so unlikely, that I should have thought the probability lay all on the other side.

I do not vindicate enthusiasm; I dread it. But can the possibility that a few should become enthusiasts be justly pleaded as an argument for giving them *all* up to actual vice and barbarism.

In one of the principal pamphlets against me, it is asserted that my writings *ought to be burned by the hands of the common hangman*. In most of them it is affirmed, that my principles and actions are corrupt and mischievous in no common degree. If the grosser crimes alleged against me be true, I am not only unfit to be allowed to teach poor children to read, but I am unfit to be tolerated in any class of society. If, on the contrary, the heavier charges should prove not to be true, may it not furnish a presumption that the less are equally unfounded? There is scarcely any motive so pernicious, nor any hypocrisy so deep, to which my plans have not been attributed; yet I have neither improved my interest nor my fortune by them. I am not of a sex to expect preferment, nor of a temper to court favour; nor was I so ignorant of mankind as to look for praise by means so little calculated to obtain it; though, perhaps, I did not reckon on such a degree of obloquy. If vanity were my motive, it has been properly punished;—if hypocrisy, I am hastening fast to answer for it at a tribunal, compared with which all human opinion weighs very light indeed; in view of which the sacrifice which I have been called to make of health, peace, and reputation shrinks into nothing.

And now, my Lord, I come to what has been the ultimate object of this too tedious letter—a request to know what is your lordship's pleasure? I have too high an opinion of your wisdom and candour to suspect the equity of your determination; and I

know too well what I owe to the station you fill, to dispute your authority, or to oppose your commands. If it be your will that my remaining schools should be abolished, I may lament your decision, but I will obey it. My deep reverence for the laws and institutions of my country inspires me with a proportionate veneration for all constituted authorities, whether in church or state. If I be not permitted to employ the short remnant of my life (which has been nearly destroyed by these prolonged attacks), in being, in any small measure and degree, actively useful, I will at least set my accusers an example of obedience to those superiors whom the providence of God has set over me, and whom, next to Him, I am bound to obey. I have the honour to be, with the highest respect, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient

H. More.

H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys

He does not scorn it, who has long endured
A fever's agony, and lived on drugs.

Barley Wood, 1808.

How have I felt, how have I *tasted* these lines of Cowper! I remember it was said more than twenty years ago, that I was the only one of the old school who strongly relished Cowper: but then he had not published the Task, which, I am sure, must have converted *you*; though, I think, our friends, Mrs. Montagu and Lord Oxford, were never brought over. Beattie came over to us, but

slowly, and I took the credit of his conversion to myself: I believe I rather frightened him into it. And so you agree with me that conversation is absolutely extinct. The classic spirit has, I think, declined with it, and I should think poetry extinct also, did it not in Walter Scott give signs of life. I have not read "Marmion," but hear it is not unworthy of the author of the "Lay."

I would have given something if I could have drank tea with your family party the evening after I had finished "*Corinne*," which your account led me to read. There never *was* such a book! such a compound of genius and bad taste! such a fermentation of sense and nonsense! The descriptions of Italy are the best, and the descriptions of love the worst I ever met with. There is no shading. As there is little nature, it excites little interest; and the virtuous hero is to me a gloomy specimen of frigid sentimentality. Corinne herself gave me too much the idea of Dr. Graham's Goddess of Health, or the French Goddess of Reason, or the English Attitudinarian of Naples, for me to take a very lively interest in her. Yet let me acknowledge, that though like Pistol I swallowed and execrated, yet I went on swallowing: and I must own it is a book which requires great knowledge, and very considerable powers of mind, to produce. She never stumbles so much as when she attempts to introduce Christianity, as there is no subject on which she appears so completely ignorant. You see, evidently, that she drags it into play, as a

creditable novelty, having, I am told, tried Atheism without success in Delphine, which I have never read.

I have been reading through two books sent me by the authors, my friends, both clergymen of Bristol. One, the Life of Thuanus. One felt glad to be introduced into such respectable company as the authors and statesmen of the days of Henri Quatre, the Sullys, the l'Hospitals, the Casaubons, the Heinsiuses, and the Grotiuses. I counselled the author to translate the huge works of Thuanus, but he says their irreclaimable prolixity must ever prevent their being popular. The other is a pamphlet, " Latium Redivivum." The object is to repress the universality of the French language, that provoking criterion of the ascendency of France, and to restore the popular use of the language of Rome ; at least, to make it the colloquial tongue of schools and universities, and the medium of our communication with foreigners ; and especially that ambassadors shall negotiate in Latin. And why not as well now as in the days of our once " right-lerned " queen ? Though I fear some of our corps diplomatique would not be very Ciceronian.

But it is time to revert to your kind letter ; and allow me to say, that from no part of it did I derive such heart-felt satisfaction as from the evidence it afforded me of the pious feelings of your heart, and your devout recognition of the merciful hand whence your multiplied blessings flow. O, my good friend !

there is no other stable foundation for solid comfort, but the Christian religion; not barely acknowledged as a truth from the conviction of external evidence (strong and important as that is), but embraced as a principle of hope and joy and peace, and felt in its suitableness to the wants and necessities of our nature, as well as in its power to alleviate, and even to sanctify, our sorrows. Little as has been my own progress in this school, yet that little was an unspeakable support to me on the bed of sickness; and in my weak and helpless state, I often thought, what would have become of me, if I had then had to begin to learn the elements of religion!

You have doubtless heard that I have had far greater trials than any which sickness could inflict. I will only say, in a few words, that two Jacobin and infidel curates, poor and ambitious, formed the design of attracting notice, and getting preferment, by attacking some charity schools (which, with no small labour, I have carried on in this county for near twenty years), as seminaries of vice, sedition, and disaffection. At this distance of time, for it has now ended in their disgrace and shame, it will make you smile when I tell you a few of the charges brought against me, viz. that I hired two men to assassinate one of these clergymen;—that I was actually taken up for seditious practices;—that I was with Hadfield in his attack on the king's life: one of them strongly insinuated this from the pulpit, and then caused the newspaper, which related the

attack, to be read at the church door. At the same time, mark the consistency! they declared that I was in the pay of Mr. Pitt, and the grand instigator (poor I) of the war, by mischievous pamphlets; and to crown the whole, that I was concerned with Charlotte Corday in the murder of Marat!!! That wicked and needy men should invent this, is not so strange as that they should have found Magazines, Reviews, and Pamphleteers to support them. My declared resolution never to defend myself, certainly encouraged them to go on. Yet how thankful am I that I kept that resolution; though the grief and astonishment excited by this combination nearly cost me my life. I can now look back, not only without emotion, to this attack, but it has been even matter of *thankfulness* to me; it helped to break my too strong attachment to the world, it showed me the vanity of human applause, and has led me, I hope, to be *more* anxious about the motives of my actions, and *less* anxious about their consequences.

I am happy in the esteem of my neighbours, and my schools flourish. I have a sister whose associated labours supply my lack of service. I had intended to have said more in answer to your letter. Your two eldest sons I well remember, and Miss Pepys. I rejoice they are all such blessings to you, and to their excellent mother.

I beg my most affectionate respects to Lady Pepys. How glad I am at your honourable and profitable retreat from your professional labours.

May God bless your clerical son, and make him an instrument to his glory!

Yours very sincerely,
H. More.

H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys

[Barley Wood], 1819.

My dear Friend,

I have been long wishing, as in duty bound, to transmit to you the thanks, both my own and those of the naked, the hungry, and the ignorant, whom you have been the instrument of clothing, feeding, and instructing, this year! May God increase His mercies to you for the mercy you have shewn to others! You may justly say, "if you wished to write to me, why then did you *not* write?" The newspapers will probably have told you why, and I am sorry that you should learn from them, before you heard from me, that I have been guilty of the weakness, at my age, of doing that imprudent and presumptuous thing, writing a book. I had fully resolved, as became me, to commit no more indiscretions of this sort; but I have broken, as did *not* become me, my resolution. Though living in retirement, falsely so called, I see so many people from every point of the compass, that I find there is a fresh crop of errors sprung up in a quarter where we did not so much look for them, namely among the religious, or rather the *professing* part of the world. Mine is a book which, in addition to its being feebly written, will bring me no small

discredit, as well with the grave as the gay. For one part of it, I expect to have the whole fashionable world, at least all that part of it who look into a grave book, falling upon me without mercy. But I can't help it; I have really seen and heard so much of the evils arising, and likely to arise, from the epidemic French mania, that "while I was musing, the fire burned, and at last I spake with my" pen. You will, I fear, think I have been too vehement, but when I see our country almost abandoned in this second assault upon its safety, and millions spent abroad, while our poor have been perishing at home, I could not restrain my feelings. The rage for a Paris excursion has become such a general infection, that curates, and even farmers in our part of the world, have caught the malady. A clergyman with ten children has been twice, and his wife is now left there, with a house full of daughters, that they may bring home the Parisian accent to a little country village! I hope this impudent book will have the honour to wait upon you in about a fortnight.

I have told you a *bold* thing of my doing, I will now tell you a *gay* thing. What do you think of my entertaining one hundred and twenty gentlemen and ladies at dinner last week, and about two hundred at tea? The superior part of the company, which attended a Bible meeting in our village, adjourned afterwards, by invitation, to Barley Wood. It was a beautiful day. Tables were laid in the garden, prodigal of flowers; the collation

was a cold one, but such as it took two days to cook. We had, besides our neighbouring gentry, many persons from Clifton, and forty clergymen of the establishment; and the white-robed nymphs made with the groups under the trees the prettiest show imaginable. You will judge that my health is improved by my being able to go through such a fatigue. The success of these societies I have much at heart: sometimes we hear of "Christian Knowledge Societies" opposed to "Bible Societies"; but I belong to both parties: I wish there was no such thing as party.

This foolish book[1] has so engaged me (for I only thought of it a few months ago), that the last volume of Clarke's Travels, the voyage to Ashantee, and Chalmers's Sermons, all lie on my table with leaves uncut! I wish I had thought of my book sooner, for this is a wretched time of the year to bring it out, as I suppose the town is empty, but I may not live to another year, so I preferred publishing it with all its faults. I hope it pleases our heavenly Father to continue to you those many blessings for which you frequently express such lively gratitude; and that you may continue to enjoy his grace, which is the crown of all His other blessings, is the cordial prayer of,

My dear Sir William,

Your very attached

and faithful friend,

H. More.

[1] *Moral Sketches of Prevailing Opinions and Manners, Foreign and Domestic.*

H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys

BARLEY WOOD, 1821.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am for the next week under a bondage to me the most oppressive of all those which have no real distress in them. An ardent friend, Sir Thomas Acland, who, by the most affectionate tyranny, is sure to carry everything his own way, has actually, against my vehemently-repeated refusal, sent down Mr. Pickersgill from London, and your poor old friend is condemned, sorely against her will, and on the verge of eternity, to see " the lack-lustre eye," and corrugated visage, snatched a little while from oblivion. The picture is for Sir Thomas, and at his expense. Besides the fatigue of sitting four hours a day to a painter, I object, in a moral point of view, that so much time out of my little fragment of life should be so spent.

Your letter comprehends so many interesting topics, that with my scanty leisure, I hardly know which to touch upon. The most important, surely, is your fervent gratitude for your uncommon domestic felicities. You do not fall under the classical complaint, " Oh happy, if they knew their happiness ! " You may translate it back into Latin.

My health, I thank the great Giver, is rather better than usual. I am a most atmospherical animal, and rise and fall with the barometer. You will judge favourably of my orthodoxy, when I tell

you I have lately entertained four bishops; not a conclave, for their visits were at different times.

I am greatly interested for the Greeks. I cannot bear that the descendants of those illustrious ancients, of whom somebody says, that

"Half our learning is their epitaph,"

should be the victims of those worse than pagans. I hope your grandsons will see the university projected by Lord Guildford, in the Ionian islands, in a flourishing state. Ithaca, I think, is to be the scene. A friend of mine has conversed much with a young Greek, placed at Cambridge by his Lordship. This gentleman *wished* to add a professorship for Theological studies. Altogether, it is a grand scheme.

I wish I had time (for I am anxious you should receive my acknowledgment of your bounty) to enter at large into the subject of instructing the poor. I have thought much on the subject. I think there is *ultraism* on both sides of the question. My views of popular instruction are narrow; the views of some others I think *too* narrow. I will give you a sketch of my own poor practice at setting out, but opposition obliged me to lower it.

Not the very poor only are deplorably ignorant. The common farmers are as illiterate as their workmen. It therefore occurred to me to employ schoolmasters, who to sound piety, added good sense and competent knowledge. In addition to instructing *all* the poor children in the parish on Sundays, at my expense, I directed him to take the

farmers' sons on week-days, at a low price, to be paid by them, and to add writing and arithmetic to reading, which was all I thought necessary for *labourers'* children. The master carefully instructed these higher boys also in religious principles, which the fathers did not object to when they got it gratuitously. I had long thought that the knowledge necessary for persons of this class, was such as would qualify them for constables, overseers, churchwardens, jurymen, and especially tend to impress them with the awful nature of an oath; which I fear is too commonly taken without any sense of its sanctity. Further than this I have never gone.

Now I know the ultra-educationist would despise these limits. I know not if you have seen a book on popular education, written by a man of great talents. Truth compels me to bear my public testimony against his extravagant plan, which is, that there is *nothing* which the poor ought not to be taught; they must not stop short of science. They must learn history in its widest extent: Goldsmith's Greece is nothing;—he recommends Mitford, etc. Now the absurdity of the thing is most obvious; supposing they had money to *buy* such books, where would they find time to read them, without the neglect of all business, and the violation of all duty? And where is all this to terminate? Only cast back your eye upon Athens, where the upper gallery pronounced sentence on Sophocles and Euripides, and an herb-woman could detect the provincial accent

of a great philosopher. Yet was there ever a more turbulent, ungovernable rabble? St. Paul tells you how they spent their time. "It was only to tell or to hear of some new thing."

I have exerted my feeble voice to prevail on my few parliamentary friends to steer the middle way between the scylla of brutal ignorance and the charybdis of a literary education. The one is cruel, the other preposterous.

I have poured out my crude opinions so rapidly, and with so little attention to exactness, that I fear you will hardly decypher my meaning.

If you take much interest in this subject, I wish you would look at the book I have been alluding to. You will find in it much that is able, and much that is true and rational; but I should greatly dread the adoption of the writer's scheme, if there were any probability of its taking place.

I wish you would read Isaiah, with an eye to the powerful efforts now making for the conversion of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Their restoration is so strongly and obviously predicted by this most enlightened of prophets and sublime of writers, that it is impossible to overlook it.

For a person who promised to let you off with only a few lines, I think I have been tedious enough. With my fervent prayers for your temporal and eternal happiness, believe me ever,

My dear friend,

Your faithful and affectionate

H. More.

H. More to Mr. Wilberforce

[Barley Wood], 1823.

My dear Friend,

Having obtained help of God, I continue to this day, which is the anniversary of my last seizure. May God have sanctified it to me! But as dear Bishop Hall says, we carry about us such a luggage of calamities, that we are never secure. Do not be frightened at my writing so soon; it is not my wont, but thinking that your time will soon be more than swallowed up, I wished to trouble you with one more of my scrawls. If I know a little of anything in the world, it is about the poor: you will not have forgotten how eager I have been for their instruction. When I set up our schools, I was considered by the farmers, and even by their betters, as the greatest enemy of my country. "We shan't have a boy to plough, or a wench to dress a shoulder of mutton," was the general cry. One of them pointed to Glastonbury Tor, saying, "we should make things as bad once more, as when the monks first brought religion and learning there." We, however, kept the noiseless tenor of our way. The rest of my journey I must finish alone. I have not, at the end of my thirty-six years, altered my opinion. But our instructions have been, and still are, confined to the Scriptures, and such books as are preparatory to, and connected with them. At Blagdon we attempted something one step higher, and employed a man, who, in addition to his large Sunday School, taught

the farmers' sons on a week-end. My plan was, that while he only appeared to teach writing and arithmetic, he should labour to infuse into them religious principles—give them such knowledge as should qualify them for churchwardens, constables, jurymen, etc. and impress on them the awful solemnities of an oath. You know how these *sinister* designs of ours were quashed! So it pleased infinite wisdom; doubtless for my deserved humiliation, and to punish my sins.

But how the tide is turned! Our poor are now to be made scholars and philosophers. I am not the champion of ignorance, but I own I am alarmed at the violence of the contrast. Even our excellent C. seems to me to refine too much; but my friend F. is an ultra of the first magnitude. The poor must not only read English, but ancient history, and even the sciences are to be laid open to them. Now, not to inquire where would they get the money—I ask, Where would a labouring man get the time? Time is the fortune of a poor man; and as to what they would gain from Grecian history, why, they would learn that the meanest citizen of Athens could determine on the merits of a tragedy of Euripides: to do which they must have always lived in a play-house, as indeed they almost always did; they were such critics in language as to detect a foreign accent in a great philosopher, etc.—and yet history does not speak of a more turbulent, unmanageable, profligate people.

Not only in the great national schools, but in the

little paltry cottage seminaries of three-pence a week, I hear of the most ridiculous instances of the affectation of *literature*. A poor little girl of this stamp was in my room one day when a gentleman was sitting with me. He asked her what she was reading at school. "Oh, Sir, the whole circle of the sciences!" "Indeed!" said he, "that must be a very large work!" "No, Sir; it is a very little book, it cost half-a-crown." My friend smiled, and lamented that what was of such easy attainment had cost him so much time and money. I asked a little girl, a servant's child, the other day, what she was reading, and if she could say her catechism. "Oh no, Madam, I am learning *Syntax*."

In many schools, I am assured, writing and accounts are taught on Sundays. This is a regular apprenticeship to sin. He who is taught arithmetic on a Sunday when a boy, will, when a man, open his shop on a Sunday. Now, in my poor judgment, all this has a revolutionary as well as irreligious tendency; and the misfortune is, that the growing ultra-ism on the side of learning, falsely so called, will irritate and inflame the old bigotry, which hugged absolute ignorance as hidden treasure, not to be parted with; while that sober measure of Christian instruction which lies between the two extremes, will be rejected by both parties.

Tuesday.—This frail and feverish being of mine did not allow me to finish my letter yesterday, so you must bear with one more absurdity. Many a child is brought to me in my room for a little

reward of a tract, etc. Since I began this scrawl, a sharp little girl was brought for this purpose. She repeated a short poem extremely well. I then said, " Now I must examine what you know of the Bible. Who was Abraham ? " After some hesitation, she answered, " I think he was an Exeter man ! "

As experience is a sort of substitute for wisdom. I thought these petty details of things under my own eye might be of some use. Happily my own schools go on in the old-fashioned way. I taught the teachers their alphabet thirty years ago, and they continue pious, faithful, and sober-minded. As Mahomet cannot go to the mountain, the mountain comes to Mahomet, and Miss Frowd, when weather permits, visits them. This is, I believe, the longest letter I have written for some time, and happily for you, the longest, probably, I ever shall write. I hope Mrs. W. is better ; my kind love to her, and to all the young ones.

Ever, my dear friend, yours,

H. More.

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THE LETTERS
of
HANNAH
MORE
with
an Introduction by
R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

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